Cowan Sc.

Mr. John Dryden.

Ae. 67.

ALL FOR LOVE:

OR, THE

WORLD WELL LOST.

A

TRAGEDY.

BY

JOHN DRYDEN, Esq;

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

The LIFE of the AUTHOR,

Facile eſt verbum aliquod ardens (ut ita dicam) notare : idque reſtinctis animorum incendiis irridere. CICERO.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. ROBERTSON,
(Succeſſor to THO. and WAL. RUDDIMAN).

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BRITISH MUSEUM
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THE

LIFE

OF

JOHN DRYDEN, Esq;

THIS illuſtrious poet was the ſon of Eraſmus Dryden, Eſq; of Tichmarſh, and grandſon of Sir Eraſmus Dryden of Canonſbury, both in Northamptonſhire. He was born Aug. 9. 1631, at Oldwinkle, or Auldwinkle, near Oundle, in the ſaid county, a village which, as he himſelf informs us, belonged to the Earl of Exeter, and which was alſo famous for giving birth to the celebrated Dr Thomas Fuller the hiſtorian.

He received the rudiments of his grammar learning at Weſtminſter ſchool, under the learned Dr Buſby, and from thence was removed in 1650 to Cambridge, being elected ſcholar of Trinity college, of which he appears, by his Latin verſes in the *Epithalamia Cantabrig.* 4to, 1662, to have been afterwards a fellow. Yet in his earlier days he gave no very extraordinary indications of genius, for even the year before he quitted the univerſity he wrote a poem on the death of Lord Haſtings, which was by no means a preſage of that amazing perfection in poetical powers which he afterwards poſſeſſed. His firſt play, *viz. The Wild Gallants*, did not appear till he was not much leſs than forty years of age, and then met with ſuch indifferent ſucceſs, that had not neceſſity afterwards compelled him to purſue the arduous taſk, the Engliſh ſtage had perhaps never been favoured with ſome of its brighteſt ornaments.

But to proceed more regularly. On the death of Oliver Cromwell, he wrote ſome heroic ſtanzas to his me-

mory; but on the reſtoration, being deſirous of ingratiating himſelf with the new court, he wrote, firſt, a poem entitled *Aſtrea redux*, and afterwards a panegyric to the King on his coronation. In 1662 he addreſſed a poem to the Lord Chancellor Hyde, preſented on a new-year's day, and in the ſame year a ſatire on the Dutch. In 1668 appeared his *Annus Mirabilis*, which was an hiſtorical poem in celebration of the Duke of York's victory over the Dutch. Theſe pieces at length obtained him the favour of the Crown; and Sir William D'Avenant dying the ſame year, Mr Dryden was appointed to ſucceed him as poet-laureat. About this time alſo his inclination for writing for the Stage ſeems firſt to have ſhewn itſelf; for, beſides his concern with Sir William D'Avenant in the alteration of Shakeſpeare's *Tempeſt*, which was the laſt work that gentleman was engaged in, Mr Dryden, in 1669, produced his *Wild Gallants*, a comedy. This, as I have before obſerved, met with very indifferent ſucceſs; yet the author, not being diſcouraged by his failure, ſoon after gave the public his *Indian Emperor*, which finding a more favourable reception, encouraged him to proceed, and that with ſuch rapidity, that, in the Key to the Duke of Buckingham's Rehearſal, he is recorded to have engaged himſelf by contract for the writing of four plays *per* year; and indeed, in the years 1679 and 1680, he appears to have fulfilled that contract. To this unhappy neceſſity that our author lay under, are to be attributed all thoſe irregularities, thoſe bombaſtic flights, and ſometimes even puerile exuberances, which he has been ſo ſeverely criticized on for, and which, in the unavoidable hurry in which he wrote, it was impoſſible he ſhould find time to reviſe, either for the lopping away or correcting. This alſo is ſurely a ſufficient excuſe for his borrowing many things both with regard to his general plots, and the particular incidents of ſome of his plays, from other authors; and indeed, it is much leſs to be wondered, that under all theſe diſadvantages he was obliged to apply to thoſe reſources which his enemies have affixed the charge of plagiariſm on him for, than that he ſhould produce ſo many admirable originals as in deſpite of them all he has done: for even at the very period I have mentioned,

tioned, we find two of the beſt plays our language has been honoured with, *The Spaniſh Friar*, and *All for Love*, in the number of thoſe publications.

In 1675, the Earl of Rocheſter, whoſe envious and malevolent diſpoſition would not permit him to ſee growing merit meet with its due reward, and was therefore ſincerely chagrin'd at the very juſt applauſe which Mr Dryden's dramatic pieces had been received with, was determined, if poſſible, to ſtrake his intereſt at court, and ſucceeded ſo far as to recommend Mr Crowne, an author by no means of equal merit, and at that time of an obſcure reputation, to write a maſque for the court, which certainly belonged to Mr Dryden's office as poet laureat. ——Nor was this the only attack, nor indeed the moſt potent one, that Mr Dryden's juſtly acquired fame drew on him: for ſome years before, the Duke of Buckingham, a man of not much better a character than Lord Rocheſter, had moſt ſeverely ridiculed ſeveral of our Author's plays, in his admired piece called *the Rehearſal*.——But though the intrinſic wit which runs through that performance cannot even to this hour fail of exciting our laughter, yet at the ſame time it ought not to be the ſtandard on which we ought to fix Mr Dryden's poetical reputation, if we conſider that the pieces there ridiculed are not any of thoſe which are looked on as the *chef d'œuvres* of this Author; that the very paſſages burleſqued are frequently, in their original places, much leſs ridiculous than when thus detached, like a rotten limb from the body of the work, and expoſed to view with additional diſtortions, and diveſted of that connection with the other parts, which, while it preſerved, gave it not only ſymmetry but beauty; and, laſtly, that the various inimitable beauties, which the critic has ſunk in oblivion, are infinitely more numerous than the deformities which he has thus induſtriouſly brought forth to our more immediate inſpection.

Mr Dryden, however, did not ſuffer theſe attacks to paſs with impunity; for, in 1679, there came out an *Eſſay on Satire*, ſaid to be written jointly by that gentleman and the Earl of Mulgrave, containing ſome very ſevere reflections on the Earl of Rocheſter and the Ducheſs of Portſmouth, who, it is not improbable, might be a joint

inſtrument in the above-mentioned affront ſhewn to Mr Dryden; and in 1681 he publiſhed his *Abſalom and Ahithophel*, in which the well known character of Zimri, drawn for the Duke of Buckingham, is certainly ſevere enough to repay all the ridicule thrown on him by that nobleman in the character of Bayes. The reſentment ſhewn by the different peers was very different; Lord Rocheſter, who was a coward as well as a man of the moſt depraved morals, baſely hired three ruffians to cudgel Dryden in a coffeehouſe; but the Duke of Buckingham, as we are told, in a more open manner, took that taſk upon himſelf, and at the ſame time preſented him with a purſe, containing no very trifling ſum of money, telling him, that he gave him the beating as a puniſhment for his impudence, but beſtowed the gold on him as a reward for his wit.

In 1680 was publiſhed a tranſlation of *Ovid's Epiſtles*, in Engliſh verſe, by ſeveral hands, two of which, together with the preface, were by Mr Dryden. In 1682 came out his *Religio Laici*, deſigned as a defence of revealed religion, againſt Deiſts, Papiſts, *&c.* and in 1684 he publiſhed a tranſlation of M. Maimbourg's hiſtory of the League, which he had undertaken by the command of King Charles II. On the death of that prince he wrote a poem ſacred to his memory, entitled *Threnodia Auguſtalis.*

Soon after the acceſſion of King James II. our Author changed his religion for that of the church of Rome, and wrote two pieces in vindication of the Romiſh tenets, *viz. A Defence of the Papers* written by the late King, of bleſſed memory, found in his ſtrong box, and the celebrated poem, afterwards anſwered by Lord Halifax, entitled *The Hind and the Panther.* By this extraordinary ſtep he not only engaged himſelf in controverſy, and incurred much cenſure and ridicule from his cotemporary wits, but, on the completion of the Revolution, being, on account of his newly-choſen religion, diſqualified from bearing any office under the government, he was ſtripped of the laurel, which, to his ſtill greater mortification, was beſtowed on Richard Flecknoe, a man to whom he had a moſt ſettled averſion. This circumſtance occaſioned his writing the very ſevere poem, called *Mac Flecknoe*

Mr

Mr Dryden's circumſtances had never been affluent; but now, being deprived of this little ſupport, he found himſelf reduced to the neceſſity of writing for mere bread. We conſequently find him, from this period, engaged in works of labour as well as genius, *viz.* in tranſlating the works of others; and to this neceſſity, perhaps, our nation ſtands indebted for ſome of the beſt tranſlations extant. In the year he loſt the laurel he publiſhed the life of St Francis Xavier, from the French. In 1693 came out a tranſlation of Juvenal and Perſius, in the firſt of which he had a conſiderable hand, and of the latter the entire execution. In 1695 was publiſhed his proſe verſion of Freſnoy's Art of Painting, and the year 1697 gave the world that tranſlation of Virgil's works entire, which ſtill does, and perhaps ever will, ſtand foremoſt among the attempts made on that author. The *petite pieces* of this eminent writer, ſuch as prologues, epilogues, epitaphs, elegies, ſongs, *&c.* are too numerous to ſpecify here, and too much diſperſed to direct the reader to: the greateſt part of them, however, are to be found in a collection of miſcellanies, in ſix vols 12mo. His laſt work is what is called *his Fables*, which conſiſt of many of the moſt intereſting ſtories in Homer, Ovid, Boccace, and Chaucer, tranſlated or modernized in the moſt elegant and poetical manner, together with ſome original pieces, among which is that amazing Ode on St Cecilia's day, which, though written in the very decline of its Author's life, and at a period when old age and diſtreſs conſpired as it were to damp his poetic ardor, and clip the wings of Fancy, yet poſſeſſes ſo much of both, as would be ſufficient to have rendered him immortal, had he never written a ſingle line beſides.

Dryden married the Lady Eliſabeth Howard, ſiſter to the Earl of Berkſhire, who ſurvived him eight years, though for the laſt four of them ſhe was a lunatic, having been deprived of her ſenſes by a nervous fever. By this lady he had three ſons, who all ſurvived him. Their names were Charles, John, and Henry. With reſpect to the eldeſt, there is a circumſtance related by Charles Wilſon, Eſq; in his life of Congreve, which ſeems ſo well atteſted, and is itſelf of ſo very extraordinary a nature,

ture, that I cannot avoid admitting it to a place here. The event is as follows:

Dryden, with all his underſtanding, was weak enough to be fond of judicial aſtrology, and uſed to calculate the nativity of his children. When his lady was in labour with his ſon Charles, he being told it was decent to withdraw, laid his watch on the table, begging one of the ladies then preſent, in a moſt ſolemn manner, to take exact notice of the very minute the child was born; which ſhe did, and acquainted him with it. About a week after, when his lady was pretty well recovered, Mr Dryden took occaſion to tell her that he had been calculating the child's nativity, and obſerved, with grief, that he was born in an evil hour, for Jupiter, Venus, and the Sun, were all under the Earth, and the lord of his aſcendant afflicted with a hateful ſquare of Mars and Saturn. If he lives to arrive at the eighth year, ſays he, "he will go near to die a violent death on his very "birth-day; but if he ſhould eſcape, as I ſee but ſmall "hopes, he will in the twenty-third year be under the "very ſame evil direction; and if he ſhould eſcape that "alſo, the thirty-third or thirty-fourth year is, I fear" —Here he was interrupted by the immoderate grief of his lady, who could no longer hear calamity propheſied to befal her ſon. The time at laſt came, and Auguſt was the inauſpicious month in which young Dryden was to enter into the eighth year of his age. The court being in progreſs, and Mr Dryden at leiſure, he was invited to the country-ſeat of the Earl of Berkſhire, his brother-in-law, to keep the long vacation with him in Charlton in Wilts; his lady was invited to her uncle Mordaunt's, to paſs the remainder of the ſummer. When they came to divide the children, Lady Eliſabeth would have him take John, and ſuffer her to take Charles; but Mr Dryden was too abſolute, and they parted in anger: he took Charles with him, and ſhe was obliged to be content with John. When the fatal day came, the anxiety of the lady's ſpirits occaſioned ſuch an effervescence of blood, as threw her into ſo violent a fever that her life was deſpaired of, till a letter came from Mr Dryden, reproving her for womaniſh credulity, and aſſuring her that her child was well, which recovered her ſpirits,

ſpirits, and in ſix weeks after ſhe received an ecclairciſſement of the whole affair. Mr Dryden, either through fear of being reckoned ſuperſtitious, or thinking it a ſcience beneath his ſtudy, was extremely cautious of letting any one know that he was a dealer in aſtrology; therefore could not excuſe his abſence, on his ſon's anniverſary, from a general hunting-match Lord Berkſhire had made, to which all the adjacent gentlemen were invited. When he went out he took care to ſet the boy a double exerciſe in the Latin tongue, which he taught his children himſelf, with a ſtrict charge not to ſtir out of the room till his return, well knowing the taſk he had ſet him would take up longer time. Charles was performing his duty in obedience to his father; but, as ill Fate would have it, the ſtag made towards the houſe, and the noiſe alarming the ſervants, they haſted out to ſee the ſport. One of them took young Dryden by the hand, and led him out to ſee it alſo, when, juſt as they came to the gate, the ſtag being at bay with the dogs, made a bold puſh, and leaped over the court wall, which was very low, and very old, and the dogs following, threw down a part of the wall ten yards in length, under which Charles Dryden lay buried. He was immediately dug out, and after ſix weeks languiſhing in a dangerous way he recovered: ſo far Dryden's prediction was fulfilled. In the twenty-third year of his age Charles fell from the top of an old tower belonging to the Vatican at Rome, occaſioned by a ſwimming in his head, with which he was ſeized, the heat of the day being exceſſive. He again recovered, but was ever after in a languiſhing ſickly ſtate. In the thirty-third year of his age, being returned to England, he was unhappily drowned at Windſor. He had, with another gentleman, ſwam twice over the Thames, but returning a third time, it was ſuppoſed he was taken with the cramp, becauſe he called out for help, though too late. Thus the father's calculation proved but too prophetical.

At laſt, after a long life, harraſſed with the moſt laborious of all fatigues, *viz.* that of the mind, and continually made anxious by diſtreſs and difficulty, our Author departed this life on the 1ſt of May 1701, and was interred in Weſtminſter-abbey. On the 19th of April

April he had been very bad with the gout and eriſipelas in one leg; but he was then ſomewhat recovered, and deſigned to go abroad; on the Friday following he ate a partridge for his ſupper, and going to take a turn in the little garden behind his houſe in Gerard-ſtreet, he was ſeized with a violent pain under the ball of the great toe of his right foot; that, unable to ſtand, he cried out for help, and was carried in by his ſervants, when, upon ſending for ſurgeons, they found a ſmall black ſpot in the place affected; he ſubmitted to their preſent applications, and when gone, called his ſon Charles to him, uſing theſe words, "I know this black ſpot is a mortification; I know alſo that it will ſeize my head, and "that they will attempt to cut off my leg; but I command you my ſon, by your filial duty, that you do not "ſuffer me to be diſmembered." As he foretold the event proved, and his ſon was too dutiful to diſobey his father's command.

On the Wedneſday morning following he breathed his laſt, under the moſt excrutiating pains, in the 69th year of his age.

The day after Mr Dryden's death the Dean of Weſtminſter ſent word to Mr Dryden's widow, that he would make a preſent of the ground, and all other abbey-fees for the funeral: the Lord Halifax likewiſe ſent to the Lady Eliſabeth, and to Mr Charles Dryden, offering to defray the expences of our Poet's funeral, and afterwards to beſtow 500l. on a monument in the Abbey; which generous offer was accepted. Accordingly, on Sunday following, the company being aſſembled, the corpſe was put into a velvet hearſe, attended by eighteen mourning coaches. When they were juſt ready to move, Lord Jefferys, ſon of the Lord Chancellor Jefferys, a name dedicated to infamy, with ſome of his rakiſh companions riding by, aſked whoſe funeral it was; and being told it was Mr Dryden's, he proteſted he ſhould not be buried in that private manner; that he would himſelf, with the Lady Eliſabeth's leave, have the honour of the interment, and would beſtow a thouſand pounds on a monument in the Abbey for him. This put a ſtop to their proceſſion; and the Lord Jefferys, with ſeveral of the gentlemen, who had alighted from their coaches,

coaches, went up ſtairs to the Lady, who was ſick in bed. His Lordſhip repeated the purport of what he had ſaid below; but the Lady Eliſabeth refuſing her conſent, he fell on his knees, vowing never to riſe till his requeſt was granted. The Lady, under a ſudden ſurpriſe, fainted away, and Lord Jefferys, pretending to have obtained her conſent, ordered the body to be carried to Mr Ruſſel's an undertaker in Cheapſide, and to be left there till further orders. In the mean time the Abbey was lighted up, the ground opened, the choir attending, and the Biſhop waiting ſome hours to no purpoſe for the corpſe. The next day Mr Charles Dryden waited on my Lord Halifax, and the Biſhop, and endeavoured to excuſe his mother, by relating the truth. Three days after, the undertaker, having received no orders, waited on the Lord Jefferys; who pretended it was a drunken frolic; that he remembered nothing of the matter, and he might do what he pleaſed with the body. Upon this the undertaker waited on the Lady Eliſabeth, who deſired a day's reſpite, which was granted. Mr Charles Dryden immediately wrote to the Lord Jefferys; who returned for anſwer, that he knew nothing of the matter, and would be troubled no more about it. Mr Dryden hereupon applied again to the Lord Halifax and the Biſhop of Rocheſter, who abſolutely refuſed to do any thing in the affair.

In this diſtreſs, Dr Garth, who had been Mr Dryden's intimate friend, ſent for the corpſe to the college of phyſicians, and propoſed a ſubſcription; which ſucceeding, about three weeks after Mr Dryden's deceaſe, Dr Garth pronounced a fine Latin oration over the body, which was conveyed from the college, attended by a numerous train of coaches to Weſtminſter-abbey, but in very great diſorder. At laſt the corpſe arrived at the Abbey, which was all unlighted: no organ played, no anthem ſung, only two of the ſinging boys preceding the corpſe, who ſung an ode of Horace, with each a ſmall candle in their hand. When the funeral was over, Mr Charles Dryden ſent a challenge to Lord Jefferys, who refuſing to anſwer it, he ſent ſeveral others, and went often himſelf, but could neither get a letter delivered, nor admittance to ſpeak to him; which ſo incenſed him, that finding his Lordſhip refuſed to anſwer him like a gentleman, he reſolved

ſolved to watch an opportunity, and brave him to fight, though with all the rules of honour; which his Lordſhip hearing, quitted the town, and Mr Charles never had an opportunity to meet him, though he ſought it to his death, with the utmoſt application.

The character of Mr Dryden has been drawn by various hands; ſome have done it in a favourable, others in an oppoſite manner. The Biſhop of Sarum, in the Hiſtory of his own Times, ſays, that the ſtage was defiled beyond all example; "Dryden, the great maſter of dramatic poetry, being a monſter of immodeſty and impurities of all ſorts." The late Lord Lanſdown took upon himſelf to vindicate Mr Dryden's character from this ſevere imputation; which was again anſwered, and apologies for it, by Mr Burnet, the biſhop's ſon. But not to dwell on theſe controverſies about his character, let us hear what Mr Congreve ſays in the dedication of Dryden's works to the Duke of Newcaſtle: Congreve knew him intimately, and as he could have no motive to deceive the world in that particular, and being a man of untainted morals, none can ſuſpect his authority; and by his account we ſhall ſee, that Dryden was indeed as amiable in private life, as a Man, as he was illuſtrious in the eye of the public, as a Poet.

"Mr Dryden (ſays Congreve) had perſonal qualities, to challenge love and eſteem from all who were truly acquainted with him. He was of a nature exceeding humane and compaſſionate, eaſily forgiving injuries, and capable of a prompt and ſincere reconciliation with thoſe who had offended him.—His friendſhip, where he profeſſed it, went much beyond his profeſſions.—As his reading had been very extenſive, ſo was he very happy in a memory tenacious of every thing he had read. He was not more poſſeſſed of knowledge, than he was communicative of it; but then his communication of it was by no means pedantic, or impoſed upon the converſation, but juſt ſuch, and went ſo far, as by the natural turns of the diſcourſe in which he was engaged, it was neceſſarily prompted or required. He was extremely ready and gentle in the correction of the errors of any writer who thought fit to conſult him, and full as ready and patient to admit of the reprehenſion of others in reſpect

of his own overſight or miſtakes. He was of a very eaſy, I may ſay, of very pleaſing acceſs; but ſomething ſlow, and, as it were, diffident in his advances to others. He had ſomething in his nature that abhorred intruſion in any ſociety whatſoever; and indeed, it is to be regretted, that he was rather blameable on the other extreme. He was of all men I ever knew the moſt modeſt, and the moſt eaſy to be diſcountenanced in his approaches, either to his ſuperiors or his equals—As to his writings—I may venture to ſay in general terms, that no man hath written in our language ſo much, and ſo various matter; and in ſo various manners ſo well. Another thing I may ſay, was very peculiar to him, which is, that his parts did not decline with his years, but that he was an improving writer to the laſt, even to near ſeventy years of age, improving even in fire and imagination as well as in judgment; witneſs his Ode on St Cecilia's Day, and his Fables, his lateſt performances. He was equally excellent in verſe and proſe: his proſe had all the clearneſs imaginable, without deviating to the language or diction of poetry; and I have heard him frequently own with pleaſure, that if he had any talent for writing proſe, it was owing to his frequently having read the writings of the great Archbiſhop Tillotſon. In his poems, his diction is, where-ever his ſubject requires it, ſo ſublime and ſo truly poetical, that its eſſence, like that of pure gold, cannot be deſtroyed. Take his verſes, and diveſt them of their rhimes, diſjoint them of their numbers, tranſpoſe their expreſſions, make what arrangement or diſpoſition you pleaſe in his words; yet ſhall there eternally be poetry, and ſomething which will be found incapable of being reduced to abſolute proſe. What he has done in any one ſpecies, or diſtinct kind of writing, would have been ſufficient to have acquired him a very great name. If he had written nothing but his Prefaces, or nothing but his Songs, or his Prologues, each of them would have entitled him to the preference and diſtinction of excelling in its kind."

Mr Dryden had no monument erected to him for ſeveral years, to which Mr Pope alludes in his epitaph intended for Mr Rowe, in this line,

Beneath a rude and nameleſs ſtone he lies.

In a note upon which we are informed, that the tomb of Mr Dryden was erected upon this hint by Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, to which was originally intended this epitaph :

This Sheffield rais'd.—The ſacred duſt below,
Was Dryden once ; the reſt who does not know?

Which was ſince changed into the plain inſcription now upon it, *viz.*

J. DRYDEN,
Natus Aug. 9. 1631.
Mortus Maii 1. 1701.
Johannes Sheffield, Dux Buckinghamienſis, fecit.

PROLOGUE.

PROLOGUE.

WHAT flocks of critics hover here to-day,
As vultures wait on armies for their prey,
All gaping for the carcaſe of a play!
With croaking notes they bode ſome dire event,
And follow dying poets by the ſcent.
Ours gives himſelf for gone; you've watch'd your time!
He fights this day unarm'd, without his rhime;
And brings a tale which often has been told,
As ſad as Dido's, *and almoſt as old.*
His hero, whom you wits his bully call,
Bates of his mettle, and ſcarce rants at all;
He's ſomewhat lewd, but a well-meaning mind,
Weeps much, fights little, but is wondrous kind.
In ſhort, a pattern, and companion fit,
For all the keeping tonies of the pit.
I could name more; a wife and miſtreſs too,
Both (to be plain) too good for moſt of you;
The wife well-natur'd, and the miſtreſs true.
Now, poets, if your fame has been his care,
Allow him all the candour you can ſpare.
A brave man ſcorns to quarrel once a-day,
Like Hectors, *in at every petty fray.*
Let thoſe find fault whoſe wit's ſo very ſmall,
They've need to ſhow that they can think at all.
Errors, like ſtraws, upon the ſurface flow;
He who would ſearch for pearls muſt dive below.
Fops may have leave to level all they can,
As pigmies would be glad to lop a man.
Half-wits are fleas; ſo little and ſo light,
We ſcarce could know they live, but that they bite.
But, as the rich, when tir'd with daily feaſts,
For change, become their next poor tenant's gueſts;
Drink hearty draughts of ale from plain brown bowls,
And ſnatch the homely raſher from the coals:
So you retiring from much better cheer,
For once may venture to do penance here.
And ſince that plenteous Autumn now is paſt,
Whoſe grapes and peaches have indulg'd your taſte,
Take in good part from our poor Poet's board,
Such rivell'd fruits as Winter can afford.

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MARC ANTONY.
VENTIDIUS, his general.
DOLABELLA, his friend.
ALEXAS, the Queen's eunuch.
SERAPION, the prieſt of Iſis.
Another prieſt.
Servants to Antony.

CLEOPATRA, Queen of Egypt.
OCTAVIA, Antony's wife.
CHARMION, IRAS, } Cleopatra's maids.
Antony's two little daughters.

SCENE, *ALEXANDRIA.*

ALL FOR LOVE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The Temple of Iſis.

Enter SERAPION, MYRIS, *Prieſts of* Iſis.

SERAPION.

PORTENTS, and prodigies, are grown ſo frequent,
That they have loſt their name. Our fruitful Nile
Flow'd ere the wonted ſeaſon, with a torrent
So unexpected, and ſo wondrous fierce,
That the wild deluge overtook the haſte
Ev'n of the hinds that watch'd it: men and beaſts
Were borne above the tops of trees, that grew
On th' utmoſt margin of the water-mark.
Then, with ſo ſwift an ebb, the flood drove backward,
It ſlipt from underneath the ſcaly herd:
Here monſtrous Phocæ panted on the ſhore;
Forſaken dolphins there, with their broad tails,
Lay laſhing the departing waves: hard by 'em,
Sea horſes floundring in the ſlimy mud,
Toſs'd up their heads, and daſh'd the ooze about 'em.

Enter ALEXAS *behind them.*

Myr. Avert theſe omens, Heav'n.

Serap. Laſt night, between the hours of twelve and one,
In a lone iſle o' the temple while I walk'd,
A whirlwind roſe, that, with a violent blaſt,
Shook all the dome: the doors around me clapt;
The iron wicket, that defends the vault,
Where the long race of Ptolemies is laid,
Burſt open, and diſclos'd the mighty dead.
From out each monument, in order plac'd,
An armed ghoſt ſtarts up: the boy-king laſt
Rear'd his inglorious head. A peal of groans

Then follow'd, and a lamentable voice
Cry'd, Egypt is no more. My blood ran back,
My ſhaking knees againſt each other knock'd:
On the cold pavement down I fell intranc'd,
And ſo unfiniſh'd left the horrid ſcene.

Alex. And dream'd you this? or, did invent the ſtory,
[*Shewing himſelf.*
To frighten our Egyptian boys withal,
And train 'em up betimes in fear of prieſthood?

Serap. My Lord, I ſaw you not,
Nor meant my words ſhould reach your ears; but what
I utter'd was moſt true.

Alex. A fooliſh dream,
Bred from the fumes of indigeſted feaſts,
And holy luxury.

Serap. I know my duty:
This goes no farther.

Alex. 'Tis not fit it ſhould.
Nor would the times now bear it, were it true.
All ſouthern, from yon hills, the Roman camp
Hangs o'er us black and threatning, like a ſtorm
Juſt breaking on our heads.

Serap. Our faint Egyptians pray for Antony;
But in their ſervile hearts they own Octavius.

Myr. Why then does Antony dream out his hours,
And tempts not fortune for a noble day,
Which might redeem what Actium loſt?

Alex. He thinks 'tis paſt recovery.

Serap. Yet the foe
Seems not to preſs the ſiege.

Alex. O, there's the wonder.
Mecænas and Agrippa, who can moſt
With Cæſar, are his foes. His wife Octavia,
Driv'n from his houſe, ſolicits her revenge;
And Dolabella, who was once his friend,
Upon ſome private grudge, now ſeeks his ruin:
Yet ſtill war ſeems on either ſide to ſleep.

Serap. 'Tis ſtrange that Antony, for ſome days paſt,
Has not beheld the face of Cleopatra;
But here, in Iſis' temple, lives retir'd,
And makes his heart a prey to black deſpair.

Alex.

Alex. 'Tis true; and we much fear he hopes by abſence
To cure his mind of love.
Serap. If he be vanquiſh'd,
Or make his peace, Egypt is doom'd to be
A Roman province; and our plenteous harveſts
Muſt then redeem the ſcarceneſs of their ſoil.
While Antony ſtood firm, our Alexandria
Rival'd proud Rome (dominion's other ſeat,)
And Fortune ſtriding, like a vaſt Coloſſus,
Could fix an equal foot of empire here.
Alex. Had I my wiſh, theſe tyrants of all nature,
Who lord it o'er mankind, ſhould periſh, periſh,
Each by the other's ſword; but, ſince our will
Is lamely follow'd by our pow'r, we muſt
Depend on one; with him to riſe or fall.
Serap. How ſtands the Queen affected?
Alex. O ſhe dotes,
She dotes, Serapion, on this vanquiſh'd man,
And winds herſelf about his mighty ruins;
Whom would ſhe yet forſake, yet yield him up,
This hunted prey, to his purſuer's hands,
She might preſerve us all: but 'tis in vain——
This changes my deſigns, this blaſts my counſels,
And makes me uſe all means to keep him here,
Whom I could wiſh divided from her arms
Far as the earth's deep centre. Well, you know
The ſtate of things; no more of your ill omens,
And black prognoſtics; labour to confirm
The people's hearts.

Enter VENTIDIUS, *talking aſide with a Gentleman of* Antony's.

Serap. Theſe Romans will o'erhear us.
But, who's that ſtranger? By his warlike port,
His fierce demeanor and erected look,
He's of no vulgar note.
Alex. O 'tis Ventidius,
Our emperor's great lieutenant in the Eaſt,
Who firſt ſhow'd Rome that Parthia could be conquer'd.
When Antony return'd from Syria laſt,
He left this man to guard the Roman frontiers.

Serap.

Serap. You ſeem to know him well.
Alex. Too well. I ſaw him in Cilicia firſt,
When Cleopatra there met Antony:
A mortal foe he was to us, and Egypt.
But, let me witneſs to the worth I hate,
A braver Roman never drew a ſword.
Firm to his prince; but, as a friend, not ſlave,
He ne'er was of his pleaſures; but preſides
O'er all his cooler hours, and morning counſels:
In ſhort, the plainneſs, fierceneſs, rugged virtue
Of an old true ſtampt Roman lives in him.
His coming bodes I know not what of ill
To our affairs. Withdraw, to mark him better;
And I'll acquaint you why I ſought you here,
And what's our preſent work.

[*They withdraw to a corner of the ſtage; and* Ventidius, *with the other, comes forward to the front.*

Ven. Not ſee him, ſay you?
I ſay, I muſt, and will.
Gent. He has commanded,
On pain of death, none ſhould approach his preſence.
Ven. I bring him news will raiſe his drooping ſpirits,
Give him new life.
Gent. He ſees not Cleopatra.
Ven. Would he had never ſeen her.
Gent. He eats not, drinks not, ſleeps not, has no uſe
Of any thing, but thought; or, if he talks,
'Tis to himſelf, and then 'tis perfect raving:
Then he defies the world, and bids it paſs;
Sometimes he gnaws his lip, and curſes loud
The boy Octavius; then he draws his mouth
Into a ſcornful ſmile, and cries, Take all,
The world's not worth my care.
Ven. Juſt, juſt his nature.
Virtue's his path; but ſometimes 'tis too narrow
For his vaſt ſoul; and then he ſtarts out wide,
And bounds into a vice that bears him far
From his firſt courſe, and plunges him in ills:
But, when his danger makes him find his fault,
Quick to obſerve, and full of ſharp remorſe,
He cenſures eagerly his own miſdeeds,
Judging himſelf with malice to himſelf,

And

And not forgiving what as man he did,
Becauſe his other parts are more than man.
He muſt not thus be loſt.

[Alexas *and the Prieſts come forward.*

Alex. You have your full inſtructions, now advance;
Proclaim your orders loudly.

Serap. Romans, Egyptians, hear the Queen's command:
Thus Cleopatra bids, let labour ceaſe,
To pomp and triumphs give this happy day,
That gave the world a lord: 'Tis Antony's.
Live Antony, and Cleopatra live.
Be this the general voice ſent up to heav'n,
And every public place repeat this echo.

Ven. Fine pageantry! [*Aſide.*

Serap. Set out before your doors
The images of all your ſleeping fathers,
With laurels crown'd; with laurels wreath your poſts,
And ſtrow with flow'rs the pavement; let the Prieſts
Do preſent ſacrifice; pour out the wine,
And call the Gods to join with you in gladneſs.

Ven. Curſe on the tongue that bids this general joy!
Can they be friends of Antony, who revel
When Antony's in danger? hide, for ſhame,
You Romans, your great grandſires images,
For fear their ſouls ſhould animate their marbles,
To bluſh at their degenerate progeny.

Alex. A love which knows no bounds to Antony,
Would mark the day with honours; when all heav'n
Labour'd for him, when each propitious ſtar
Stood wakeful in his orb, to watch that hour,
And ſhed his better influence. Her own birth-day
Our Queen neglected, like a vulgar Fate,
That paſs'd obſcurely by.

Ven. Would it had ſlept,
Divided far from his; till ſome remote
And future age had call'd it out, to ruin
Some other prince, not him.

Alex. Your Emperor,
Tho' grown unkind, would be more gentle, than
T' upbraid my Queen, for loving him too well.

Ven. Does the mute ſacrifice upbraid the prieſt;

He

He knows him not his executioner.
O, ſhe has deck'd his ruin with her love,
Led him in golden bands to gaudy ſlaughter,
And made perdition pleaſing: ſhe has left him
The blank of what he was;
I tell thee, Eunuch, ſhe has quite unmann'd him.
Can any Roman ſee, and know him now,
Thus alter'd from the lord of half mankind,
Unbent, unſinew'd, made a woman's toy,
Shrunk from the vaſt extent of all his honours,
And crampt within a corner of the world?
O, Antony!
Thou braveſt ſoldier, and thou beſt of friends!
Bounteous as Nature; next to Nature's God!
Could'ſt thou but make new worlds, ſo would'ſt thou give 'em,
As bounty were thy being. Rough in battle
As the firſt Romans, when they went to war;
Yet after victory, more pitiful,
Than all their praying virgins left at home!

Alex. Would you could add to thoſe more ſhining virtues,
His truth to her who loves him.

Ven. Would I could not.
But, wherefore waſte I precious hours with thee?
Thou art her darling miſchief, her chief engine,
Antony's other fate. Go, tell thy Queen,
Ventidius is arriv'd, to end her charms.
Let your Egyptian timbrels play alone;
Nor mix effeminate ſounds with Roman trumpets,
You dare not fight for Antony; go pray,
And keep your cowards holy-day in temples.

Exeunt Alex. Serap.

Re-enter the GENTLEMAN *of* M. Antony.

2 *Gent.* The Emperor approaches, and commands,
On pain of death, that none preſume to ſtay.

1 *Gent.* I dare not diſobey him. [*Going out with the other.*

Ven. Well, I dare.
But I'll obſerve him firſt unſeen, and find
Which way his humour drives: the reſt I'll venture.

[*Withdraws.*

Enter

Enter ANTONY, *walking with a diſturb'd motion before he ſpeaks.*

Ant. They tell me, 'tis my birth-day, and I'll keep it
With double pomp of ſadneſs.
'Tis what the day deſerves, which gave me breath.
Why was I rais'd the meteor of the world,
Hung in the ſkies, and blazing as I travell'd,
'Till all my fires were ſpent; and then caſt downward
To be trod out by Cæſar?
Ven. aſide.] On my ſoul,
'Tis mournful, wond'rous mournful!
Ant. Count thy gains.
Now, Antony, would'ſt thou be born for this?
Glutton of fortune, thy devouring youth
Has ſtarv'd thy waning age.
Ven. How ſorrow ſhakes him! [*Aſide.*
So now the tempeſt tears him up by th' roots,
And on the ground extends the noble ruin.
Ant. having thrown himſelf down.] Lie there, thou ſhadow of an emperor;
The place thou preſſeſt on thy mother Earth
Is all thy empire now: now it contains thee;
Some few days hence, and then 'twill be too large,
When thou'rt contracted in thy narrow urn,
Shrunk to a few cold aſhes; then Octavia,
(For Cleopatra will not live to ſee it)
Octavia then will have thee all her own,
And bear thee in her widow'd hand to Cæſar;
Cæſar will weep, the crocodile will weep,
To ſee his rival of the univerſe
Lie ſtill and peaceful there. I'll think no more on't.
Give me ſome muſic; look that it be ſad:
I'll ſooth my melancholy, till I ſwell,
And burſt myſelf with ſighing——— [*Soft muſic.*
'Tis ſomewhat to my humour: ſtay, I fancy
I'm now turn'd wild, a commoner of nature;
Of all forſaken, and forſaking all;
Live in a ſhady foreſt's ſylvan ſcene,
Stretch'd at my length beneath ſome blaſted oak,
I lean my head upon the moſſy bark,
And look juſt of a piece as I grew from it:

My

My uncomb'd locks, matted like miſleto,
Hang o'er my hoary face; a murm'ring brook
Runs at my foot.
Vent. Methinks I fancy
Myſelf there too.
Ant. The herd come jumping by me,
And fearleſs, quench their thirſt, while I look on,
And take me for their fellow-citizen.
More of this image, more; it lulls my thoughts.
[*Soft muſic again.*
Vent. I muſt diſturb him; I can hold no longer.
[*Stands before him.*
Ant. ſtarting up.] Art thou Ventidius?
Vent. Are you Antony?
I'm liker what I was, than you to him
I left you laſt.
Ant. I'm angry.
Vent. So am I.
Ant. I would be private: leave me.
Vent. Sir, I love you,
And therefore will not leave you.
Ant. Will not leave me?
Where have you learnt that anſwer? Who am I?
Vent. My Emperor: the man I love next Heaven:
If I ſaid more, I think 'twere ſcarce a ſin:
You're all that's good, and god-like.
Ant. All that's wretched.
You will not leave me then?
Vent. 'Twas too preſuming
To ſay I would not; but I dare not leave you:
And 'tis unkind in you to chide me hence
So ſoon, when I ſo far have come to ſee you.
Ant. Now thou haſt ſeen me, art thou ſatisfy'd?
For, if a friend, thou haſt beheld enough;
And if a foe, too much.
Ven. Look, Emperor, this is no common dew.
[*Weeping.*
I have not wept theſe forty years; but now
My mother comes afreſh into my eyes;
I cannot help her ſoftneſs
Ant. By Heav'n, he weeps! poor good old man, he weeps!

The big round drops courſe one another down
The furrows of his cheeks. Stop 'em, Ventidius,
Or I ſhall bluſh to death: they ſet my ſhame
That caus'd 'em full before me.
Ven. I'll do my beſt.
Ant. Sure there's contagion in the tears of friends:
See, I have caught it too. Believe me, 'tis not
For my own griefs, but thine———Nay, Father.
Ven. Emperor!
Ant. Emperor! why, that's the ſtile of victory:
The conqu'ring ſoldier, red with unfelt wounds,
Salutes his general ſo: but never more
Shall that ſound reach my ears.
Ven. I warrant you.
Ant. Actium, Actium! Oh!———
Ven. It ſits too near you.
Ant. Here, here it lies; a lump of lead by day,
And in my ſhort, diſtracted nightly ſlumbers,
The hag that rides my dreams———
Ven. Out with it, give it vent.
Ant. Urge not my ſhame.
I loſt a battle.
Ven. So has Julius done.
Ant. Thou favour'ſt me, and ſpeak'ſt not half thou think'ſt:
For Julius fought it out, and loſt it fairly:
But Antony———
Ven. Nay, ſtop not.
Ant. Antony,
(Well, thou wilt have it) like a coward, fled,
Fled while his ſoldiers fought; fled firſt, Ventidius.
Thou long'ſt to curſe me, and I give thee leave.
I know thou cam'ſt prepar'd to rail.
Ven. I did.
Ant. I'll help thee—I have been a man, Ventidius.
Ven. Yes, and a brave one; but———
Ant. I know thy meaning.
But I have loſt my reaſon, have diſgrac'd
The name of ſoldier, with inglorious eaſe.
In the full vintage of my flowing honours,
Sate ſtill, and ſaw it preſt by other hands.
Fortune came ſmiling to my youth, and woo'd it,

And purple greatneſs met my ripen'd years.
When firſt I came to empire, I was borne
On tides of people, crowding to my triumphs;
The wiſh of nations, and the willing world
Receiv'd me as its pledge of future peace;
I was ſo great, ſo happy, ſo belov'd,
Fate could not ruin me; till I took pains
And work'd againſt my fortune, chid her from me,
And turn'd her looſe; yet ſtill ſhe came again.
My careleſs days and my luxurious nights
At length have wearied her, and now ſhe's gone,
Gone, gone, divorc'd for ever. Help me, Soldier,
To curſe this madman, this induſtrious fool,
Who labour'd to be wretched: pr'ythee, curſe me.

Ven. No.

Ant. Why?

Ven. You are too ſenſible already
Of what you've done, too conſcious of your failings,
And, like a ſcorpion, whipt by others firſt
To fury, ſting yourſelf in mad revenge.
I would bring balm, and pour it in your wounds,
Cure your diſtemper'd mind, and heal your fortunes.

Ant. I know thou would'ſt.

Ven. I will.

Ant. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Ven. You laugh.

Ant. I do, to ſee officious love
Give cordials to the dead.

Ven. You would be loſt then?

Ant. I am.

Ven. I ſay you are not. Try your fortune.

Ant. I have, to th' utmoſt. Doſt thou think me deſperate,
Without juſt cauſe? No, when I found all loſt
Beyond repair, I hid me from the world,
And learnt to ſcorn it here; which now I do
So heartily, I think it is not worth
The coſt of keeping.

Ven. Cæſar thinks not ſo:
He'll thank you for the gift he could not take.
You would be kill'd like Tully, would you? do,
Hold out your throat to Cæſar, and die tamely.

Ant.

Ant. No, I can kill myſelf; and ſo reſolve.
Ven. I can die with you too when time ſhall ſerve;
But fortune calls upon us now to live,
To fight, to conquer.
Ant. Sure thou dream'ſt, Ventidius.
Ven. No, 'tis you dream, you ſleep away your hours
In deſperate ſloth, miſcall'd philoſophy.
Up, up, for honour's ſake; twelve legions wait you,
And long to call you chief: by painful journeys,
I led 'em, patient both of heat and hunger,
Down from the Parthian marches, to the Nile.
'Twill do you good to ſee their ſun-burnt faces,
Their ſcarr'd cheeks, and chopt hands: there's virtue in 'em.
They'll ſell thoſe mangled limbs at dearer rates
Than yon trim bands can buy.
Ant. Where left you them?
Ven. I ſaid, in lower Syria.
Ant. Bring 'em hither;
There may be life in theſe.
Ven. They will not come.
Ant. Why didſt thou mock my hopes with promis'd aids,
To double my deſpair? They're mutinous.
Ven. Moſt firm and loyal.
Ant. Yet they will not march
To ſuccour me? O trifler!
Ven. They petition
You would make haſte to head 'em.
Ant. I'm beſieg'd.
Ven. There's but one way ſhut up: how came I hither?
Ant. I will not ſtir.
Ven. They would perhaps deſire
A better reaſon.
Ant. I have never us'd
My ſoldiers to demand a reaſon of
My actions. Why did they refuſe to march?
Ven. They ſaid they would not fight for Cleopatra.
Ant. What was't they ſaid?
Ven. They ſaid they would not fight for Cleopatra.
Why ſhould they fight indeed to make her conquer,
And make you more a ſlave? to gain you kingdoms,

Which, for a kiſs, at your next midnight feaſt,
You'll ſell to her; then ſhe new-names her jewels,
And calls this diamond ſuch or ſuch a tax,
Each pendant in her ear ſhall be a province.

Ant. Ventidius, I allow your tongue free licence
On all my other faults; but, on your life,
No word of Cleopatra: ſhe deſerves
More worlds than I can loſe.

Ven. Behold, you Pow'rs,
To whom you have entruſted human kind;
See Europe, Afric, Aſia, put in balance,
And all weigh'd down by one light worthleſs woman!
I think the Gods are Antonies, and give,
Like prodigals, this nether world away
To none but waſteful hands.

Ant. You grow preſumptuous.

Ven. I take the privilege of plain love to ſpeak.

Ant. Plain love! plain arrogance, plain inſolence!
Thy men are cowards; thou, an envious traitor;
Who, under ſeeming honeſty, hath vented
The burden of thy rank o'erflowing gall.
O that thou wert my equal; great in arms
As the firſt Cæſar was, that I might kill thee
Without a ſtain to honour!

Ven. You may kill me:
You have done more already, call'd me traitor.

Ant. Art thou not one?

Ven. For ſhowing you yourſelf,
Which none elſe durſt have done? but had I been
That name, which I diſdain to ſpeak again,
I needed not have ſought your abject fortunes,
Come to partake your fate, to die with you.
What hinder'd me to've led my conqu'ring eagles
To fill Octavius' bands? I could have been
A traitor then, a glorious happy traitor,
And not have been ſo call'd.

Ant. Forgive me, Soldier:
I've been too paſſionate

Ven. You thought me falſe;
Thought my old age betray'd you: kill me, Sir;
Pray kill me; yet you need not, your unkindneſs
Has left your ſword no work.

Ant.

Ant. I did not think ſo;
I ſaid it in my rage: pr'ythee forgive me:
Why didſt thou tempt my anger, by diſcovery
Of what I would not hear.
Ven. No prince but you
Could merit that ſincerity I us'd,
Nor durſt another man have ventur'd it;
But you, ere love miſled your wand'ring eye
Were ſure the chief and beſt of human race,
Fram'd in the very pride and boaſt of nature;
So perfect, that the gods who form'd you wonder'd
At their own ſkill, and cry'd, A lucky hit
Has mended our deſign. Their envy hinder'd,
Elſe you had been immortal, and a pattern,
When Heav'n would work for oſtentation's ſake,
To copy out again.
Ant. But Cleopatra——
Go on; for I can bear it now.
Ven. No more.
Ant. Thou dar'ſt not truſt my paſſion; but thou may'ſt;
Thou only lov'ſt: the reſt have flatter'd me.
Ven. Heav'n's bleſſings on your heart, for that kind word.
May I believe you love me? ſpeak again.
Ant. Indeed I do. Speak this, and this, and this.
[*Hugging him.*
Thy praiſes were unjuſt; but, I'll deſerve 'em,
And yet mend all. Do with me what thou wilt;
Lead me to victory, thou know'ſt the way.
Ven. And, will you leave this———
Ant. Pr'ythee do not curſe her,
And I will leave her; though, Heav'n knows, I love
Beyond life, conqueſt, empire; all, but honour:
But I will leave her.
Ven. That's my royal maſter.
And, ſhall we fight?
Ant. I warrant thee, old Soldier,
Thou ſhalt behold me once again in iron,
And at the head of our old troops, that beat
The Parthians, cry aloud, Come follow me.
Ven. O now I hear my Emperor! in that word
Octavius fell. Gods, let me ſee that day,

And, if I have ten years behind, take all;
I'll thank you for th' exchange.
Ant. Oh Cleopatra!
Ven. Again?
Ant. I've done: in that laſt ſigh, ſhe went.
Cæſar ſhall know what 'tis to force a lover
From all he holds moſt dear.
Ven. Methinks you breathe
Another ſoul: your looks are more divine;
You ſpeak a hero, and you move a god.
Ant. O, thou haſt fir'd me: my ſoul's up in arms,
And mans each part about me; once again,
That noble eagerneſs of fight has ſeiz'd me;
That eagerneſs, with which I darted upward
To Caſſius' camp: in vain the ſteepy hill
Oppos'd my way; in vain a war of ſpears
Sung round my head, and planted all my ſhield;
I won the trenches, while my foremoſt men
Lagg'd on the plain below.
Ven. Ye gods, ye gods,
For ſuch another hour!
Ant. Come on, my Soldier!
Our hearts and arms are ſtill the ſame: I long
Once more to meet our foes; that thou and I,
Like Time and Death, marching before our troops,
May taſte fate to 'em: mow 'em out a paſſage,
And, entering where the foremoſt ſquadrons yield,
Begin the noble harveſt of the field. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter CLEOPATRA, IRAS, *and* ALEXAS.

CLEOPATRA.

WHAT ſhall I do, or whither ſhall I turn?
Ventidius has o'ercome, and he will go.
Alex. He goes to fight for you.
Cleo. Then he would ſee me, ere he went to fight:
Flatter me not: if once he goes, he's loſt;
And all my hopes deſtroy'd.

Alex.

Alex. Does this weak paſſion
Become a mighty queen?
Cleo. I am no queen:
Is this to be a queen, to be beſieg'd
By yon inſulting Roman, and to wait
Each hour the victor's chain? Theſe ills are ſmall;
For Antony is loſt, and I can mourn
For nothing elſe but him. Now come, Octavius,
I have no more to loſe; prepare thy bands;
I'm fit to be a captive: Antony
Has taught my mind the fortune of a ſlave.
Iras. Call reaſon to aſſiſt you.
Cleo. I have none,
And none would have: my love's a noble madneſs,
Which ſhows the cauſe deſerv'd it. Moderate ſorrow
Fits vulgar love; and for a vulgar man:
But I have lov'd with ſuch tranſcendent paſſion,
I ſoar'd, at firſt, quite out of reaſon's view,
And now am loſt above it.——No, I'm proud
'Tis thus: would Antony could ſee me now;
Think you he would not ſigh? though he muſt leave me,
Sure he would ſigh: for he is noble natur'd,
And bears a tender heart: I know him well.
Ah no! I know him not; I knew him once,
But now 'tis paſt.
Iras. Let it be paſt with you:
Forget him, Madam.
Cleo. Never, never, Iras.
He once was mine; and once, tho' now 'tis gone,
Leaves a faint image of poſſeſſion ſtill.
Alex. Think him unconſtant, cruel and ungrateful.
Cleo. I cannot: if I could, thoſe thoughts were vain;
Faithleſs, ungrateful, cruel, though he be,
I ſtill muſt love him.

Enter CHARMION.

Now, what news, my Charmion?
Will he be kind? and, will he not forſake me?
Am I to live or die? nay, do I live?
Or am I dead? for when he gave his anſwer,
Fate took the word, and then I liv'd or dy'd.
Char. I found him, Madam——

Cleo.

Cleo. A long ſpeech preparing?
If thou bring'ſt comfort, haſte, and give it me;
For never was more need.
Iras. I know he loves you.
Cleo. Had he been kind, her eyes had told me ſo,
Before her tongue could ſpeak it: now ſhe ſtudies
To ſoften what he ſaid; but give me death,
Juſt as he ſent it, Charmion, undiſguis'd,
And in the words he ſpoke.
Char. I found him then
Incompaſs'd round, I think, with iron ſtatues,
So mute, ſo motionleſs his ſoldiers ſtood,
While awfully he caſt his eyes about,
And every leader's hopes and fears ſurvey'd:
Methought he look'd reſolv'd and yet not pleas'd.
When he beheld me ſtruggling in the crowd,
He bluſh'd, and bade make way.
Alex. There's comfort yet.
Char. Ventidius fixt his eyes upon my paſſage
Severely, as he meant to frown me back,
And ſullenly gave place: I told my meſſage
Juſt as you gave it, broken and diſorder'd:
I number'd in it all your ſighs and tears,
And while I mov'd your pitiful requeſt,
That you but only begg'd a laſt farewell,
He fetch'd an inward groan, and ev'ry time
I nam'd you, ſigh'd, as if his heart were breaking,
But ſhunn'd my eyes, and guiltily look'd down;
He ſeem'd not now that awful Antony
Who ſhook an arm'd aſſembly with his nod,
But making ſhow as he would rub his eyes,
Diſguis'd and blotted out a falling tear.
Cleo. Did he then weep? and was I worth a tear?
If what thou haſt to ſay be not as pleaſing,
Tell me no more, but let me die contented.
Char. He bid me ſay, He knew himſelf ſo well,
He could deny you nothing, if he ſaw you;
And therefore———
Cleo. Thou would'ſt ſay, he would not ſee me?
Char, And therefore begg'd you not to uſe a power,
Which he could ill reſiſt; yet he ſhould ever
Reſpect you as he ought,

Cleo.

Cleo. Is that a word
For Antony to uſe to Cleopatra?
Oh that faint word, Reſpect! how I diſdain it!
Diſdain myſelf for loving after it!
He ſhould have kept that word for cold Octavia,
Reſpect is for a wife: am I that thing,
That dull inſipid lump, without deſires,
And without pow'r to give 'em?

Alex. You misjudge;
You ſee thro' love, and that deludes your ſight:
As what is ſtraight, ſeems crooked thro' the water;
But I, who bear my reaſon undiſturb'd,
Can ſee this Antony, this dreaded man,
A fearful ſlave, who fain would run away,
And ſhuns his maſter's eyes; if you purſue him,
My life on't, he ſtill drags a chain along,
That needs muſt clog his flight.

Cleo. Could I believe thee!

Alex. By every circumſtance I know he loves.
True, he's hard preſt, by int'reſt and by honour:
Yet he but doubts, and parlies, and caſts out
Many a long look for ſuccour.

Cleo. He ſends word,
He fears to ſee my face.

Alex. And would you more?
He ſhows his weakneſs who declines the combat;
And you muſt urge your fortune. Could he ſpeak
More plainly? To my ears, the meſſage ſounds,
Come to my reſcue, Cleopatra, come;
Come, free me from Ventidius; from my tyrant:
See me, and give me a pretence to leave him.
I hear his trumpets. This way he muſt paſs.
Pleaſe you, retire a while; I'll work him firſt,
That he may bend more eaſy.

Cleo. You ſhall rule me;
But all, I fear, in vain. [*Ex. with* Char. *and* Iras,

Alex. I fear ſo too;
Tho' I conceal'd my thoughts, to make her bold;
But 'tis our utmoſt means, and Fate befriend it.
[*Withdraws:*

Enter

Enter Lictors *with faſces; one bearing the Eagle: then enter* ANTONY *with* VENTIDIUS, *followed by other commanders.*

Ant. Octavius is the minion of blind chance,
But holds from virtue nothing.
Ven. Has he courage?
Ant. But juſt enough to ſeaſon him from coward:
O, 'tis the coldeſt youth upon a charge,
The moſt deliberate fighter! if he ventures
(As in Illyria once they ſay he did
To ſtorm a town) 'tis when he cannot chuſe,
When all the world have fixt their eyes upon him:
And then he lives on that for ſeven years after.
But at a cloſe revenge he never fails.
Ven. I heard you challeng'd him.
Ant. I did, Ventidius,
What think'ſt thou was his anſwer? 'Twas ſo tame,—
He ſaid he had more ways than one to die;
I had not.
Ven. Poor!
Ant. He has more ways than one;
But he would chuſe 'em all before that one.
Ven. He firſt would chuſe an ague, or a fever.
Ant. No: it muſt be an ague, not a fever:
He has not warmth enough to die by that.
Ven. Or old age and a bed.
Ant. Ay, there's his choice.
He would live, like a lamp, to the laſt wink,
And crawl upon the utmoſt verge of life:
O Hercules! why ſhould a man like this,
Who dares not truſt his fate for one great action,
Be all the care of Heav'n? Why ſhould he lord it
O'er fourſcore thouſand men, of whom each one
Is braver than himſelf?
Ven. You conquer'd for him:
Philippi knows it; there you ſhar'd with him
That empire, which your ſword made all your own.
Ant. Fool that I was, upon my Eagle's wings
I bore this wren, 'till I was tir'd with ſoaring,
And now he mounts above me.
Good Heav'ns, is this, is this the man who braves me?

Who

Who bids my age make way? Drives me before him,
To the world's ridge, and ſweeps me off like rubbiſh?
Ven. Sir, we loſe time; the troops are mounted all.
Ant. Then give the word to march:
I long to leave this priſon of a town,
To join the legions; and, in open field,
Once more to ſhow my face. Lead, my deliverer.

Enter ALEXAS.

Alex. Great Emperor,
In mighty arms renown'd above mankind,
But in ſoft pity to th' oppreſt a god,
This meſſage ſends the mournful Cleopatra
To her departing Lord.
Ven. Smooth ſycophant!
Alex. A thouſand wiſhes, and ten thouſand pray'rs,
Millions of bleſſings wait you to the wars;
Millions of ſighs in tears ſhe ſends you too;
And would have ſent
As many dear embraces to your arms,
As many parting kiſſes to your lips:
But thoſe, ſhe fears, have weary'd you already.
Ven. aſide.] Falſe crocodile!
Alex. And yet ſhe begs not now, you would not leave her,
That were a wiſh too mighty for her hopes,
And too preſuming, for her low fortune, and your ebbing love;
That were a wiſh for her more proſp'rous days,
Her blooming beauty, and your growing kindneſs.
Ant. aſide.] Well, I muſt man it out. What would the Queen?
Alex. Firſt to theſe noble warriors who attend
Your daring courage in the chace of fame,
(Too daring, and too dang'rous for her quiet)
She humbly recommends all ſhe holds dear,
All her own cares and fears, the care of you.
Ven. Yes, witneſs Actium.
Ant. Let him ſpeak, Ventidius.
Alex. You, when his matchleſs valour bears him forward,
With ardor too heroic, on his foes,

Fall

Fall down as ſhe would do, before his feet;
Lie in his way, and ſtop the paths of death;
Tell him, this god is not invulnerable,
That abſent Cleopatra bleeds in him;
And, that you may remember her petition,
She begs you wear theſe trifles, as a pawn,
Which, at your wiſh'd return, ſhe will redeem
[*Gives jewels to the Commanders.*
With all the wealth of Egypt:
This, to the great Ventidius ſhe preſents,
Whom ſhe can never count her enemy,
Becauſe he loves her lord.
Ven. Tell her I'll none on't;
I'm not aſham'd of honeſt poverty:
Not all the diamonds of the Eaſt can bribe
Ventidius from his faith I hope to ſee
Theſe, and the reſt of all her ſparkling ſtore,
Where they ſhall more deſervingly be plac'd.
Ant. And who muſt wear 'em then?
Ven. The wrong'd Octavia.
Ant. You might have ſpar'd that word.
Ven. And ſhe that bribe.
Ant. But have I no remembrance?
Alex. Yes, a dear one:
Your ſlave, the Queen——
Ant. My miſtreſs.
Alex. Then your miſtreſs,
Your miſtreſs would, ſhe ſays, have ſent her ſoul,
But that you had long ſince; ſhe humbly begs
This ruby bracelet, ſet with bleeding hearts,
(The emblems of her own), may bind your arm.
[*Preſenting a bracelet.*
Ven. Now, my beſt Lord, in Honour's name, I aſk you,
For manhood's ſake, and for your own dear ſafety,
Touch not theſe poiſon'd gifts,
Infected by the ſender, touch 'em not:
Myriads of blueſt plagues lie underneath 'em,
And more than aconite has dipt the ſilk.
Ant. Nay, now you grow too cynical, Ventidius:
A lady's favours may be worn with honour.
What! to refuſe her bracelet! On my ſoul,
When I lie penſive in my tent alone,

'Twill paſs the wakeful hours of winter nights,
To tell thoſe pretty beads upon my arm,
To count for every one a ſoft embrace,
A melting kiſs at ſuch and ſuch a time;
And now and then the fury of her love,
When——And what harm's in this?

Alex. None, none, my Lord,
But what's to her, that now 'tis paſt for ever.

Ant. going to tie it.] We ſoldiers are ſo aukward—help me tie it.

Alex. In faith, my Lord, we courtiers too are aukward
In theſe affairs: ſo are all men indeed:
Ev'n I, who am not one. But ſhall I ſpeak?

Ant. Yes, freely.

Alex. Then, my Lord, fair hands alone
Are fit to tie it; ſhe who ſent it, can.

Ven. Hell, death! this eunuch-pandar ruins you.
You will not ſee her?

[Alexas *whiſpers an attendant, who goes out.*

Ant. But to take my leave.

Ven. Then I have waſh'd an Ethiope. Y'are undone;
Y'are in the toils: y'are taken; y'are deſtroy'd:
Her eyes do Cæſar's work.

Ant. You fear too ſoon.
I'm conſtant to myſelf: I know my ſtrength;
And yet ſhe ſhall not think me barbarous neither,
Born in the depths of Afric: I'm a Roman,
Bred to the rules of ſoft humanity.
A gueſt, and kindly us'd, ſhould bid farewell.

Ven. You do not know
How weak you are to her, how much an infant;
You are not proof againſt a ſmile or glance;
A ſigh will quite diſarm you.

Ant. See, ſhe comes!
Now you ſhall find your error. Gods, I thank you:
I form'd the danger greater than it was,
And now 'tis near, 'tis leſſen'd.

Ven. Mark the end yet.

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, *and* IRAS.

Ant. Well, Madam, we are met.

Cleo. Is this a meeting?
Then, we muſt part!
Ant. We muſt.
Cleo. Who ſays we muſt?
Ant. Our own hard fates.
Cleo. We make thoſe fates ourſelves.
Ant. Yes, we have made 'em; we have lov'd each other
Into our mutual ruin.
Cleo. The gods have ſeen my joys with envious eyes;
I have no friends in heav'n: and all the world,
(As 'twere the bus'neſs of mankind to part us),
Is arm'd againſt my love: e'en you yourſelf
Join with the reſt; you, you are arm'd againſt me.
Ant. I will be juſtify'd in all I do
To late poſterity, and therefore hear me.
If I mix a lie
With any truth, reproach me freely with it;
Elſe, favour me with ſilence.
Cleo. You command me,
And I am dumb.
Ven. I like this well: he ſhows authority.
Ant. That I derive my ruin
From you alone——
Cleo. O Heav'ns! I ruin you!
Ant. You promis'd me your ſilence, and you break it
Ere I have ſcarce begun.
Cleo. Well, I obey you.
Ant. When I beheld you firſt, it was in Egypt,
Ere Cæſar ſaw your eyes; you gave me love,
And were too young to know it; that I ſettled
Your father in his throne, was for your ſake:
I left th' acknowledgment for time to ripen.
Cæſar ſtept in, and with a greedy hand
Pluck'd the green fruit, ere the firſt bluſh of red
Yet cleaving to the bough. He was my Lord,
And was, beſide, too great for me to rival.
But I deſerv'd you firſt, tho' he enjoy'd you.
When, after, I beheld you in Cilicia,
An enemy to Rome, I pardon'd you.
Cleo. I clear'd myſelf——
Ant. Again you break your promiſe.
I lov'd you ſtill, and took your weak excuſes,
Took you into my boſom, ſtain'd by Cæſar,

And not half mine: I went to Egypt with you,
And hid me from the bus'neſs of the world,
Shut out enquiring nations from my ſight,
To give whole years to you.
Ven. Yes, to your ſhame be't ſpoken. [*Aſide.*
Ant. How I lov'd
Witneſs ye days and nights, and all ye hours,
That danc'd away with down upon your feet,
As all your bus'neſs were to count my paſſion.
One day paſt by, and nothing ſaw but love:
Another came, and ſtill 'twas only love:
The ſuns were weary'd out with looking on,
And I untir'd with loving.
I ſaw you ev'ry day, and all the day;
And ev'ry day was ſtill but as the firſt;
So eager was I ſtill to ſee you more.
Ven. 'Tis all too true.
Ant. Fulvia, my wife, grew jealous,
As ſhe indeed had reaſon, rais'd a war
In Italy, to call me back.
Ven. But yet
You went not.
Ant. While within your arms I lay,
The world fell mould'ring from my hands each hour,
And left me ſcarce a graſp. I thank your love fort't.
Ven. Well puſh'd: that laſt was home.
Cleo. Yet may I ſpeak?
Ant. If I have urg'd a falſehood, yes; elſe, not.
Your ſilence ſays I have not. Fulvia dy'd;
(Pardon, you gods, with my unkindneſs dy'd.)
To ſet the world at peace, I took Octavia,
This Cæſar's ſiſter; in her pride of youth,
And flow'r of beauty did I wed that lady,
Whom, bluſhing, I muſt praiſe, becauſe I left her.
You call'd; my love obey'd the fatal ſummons:
This rais'd the Roman arms; the cauſe was yours.
I would have fought by land, where I was ſtronger;
You hinder'd it: yet, when I fought at ſea,
Forſook me fighting; and (oh ſtain to honour!
Oh laſting ſhame!) I knew not that I fled;
But fled to follow you.
Ven. What haſte ſhe made to hoiſt her purple ſails!

And, to appear magnificent in flight,
Drew half our ſtrength away.
Ant. All this you caus'd.
And would you multiply more ruins on me?
This honeſt man, my beſt, my only friend,
Has gather'd up the ſhipwreck of my fortunes;
Twelve legions I have left, my laſt recruits,
And you have watch'd the news, and bring your eyes
To ſeize them too. If you have ought to anſwer,
Now ſpeak, you have free leave.
Alex. aſide.] She ſtands confounded:
Deſpair is in her eyes.
Ven. Now lay a ſigh i' th' way, to ſtop his paſſage:
Prepare a tear, and bid it for his legions;
'Tis like they ſhall be ſold.
Cleo. How ſhall I plead my cauſe, when you my judge
Already have condemn'd me? Shall I bring
The love you bore me for my advocate?
That now is turn'd againſt me, that deſtroys me;
For, love once paſt, is, at the beſt, forgotten;
But oftner ſours to hate: 'twill pleaſe my Lord
To ruin me, and therefore I'll be guilty.
But could I once have thought it would have pleas'd you,
That you would pry, with narrow ſearching eyes,
Into my faults, ſevere to my deſtruction,
And watching all advantages with care,
That ſerve to make me wretched? Speak, my Lord,
For I end here. Though I deſerve this uſage,
Was it like you to give it?
Ant. O you wrong me,
To think I ſought this parting, or deſir'd
T' accuſe you more than what will clear myſelf,
And juſtify this breach.
Cleo. Thus low I thank you.
And ſince my innocence will not offend,
I ſhall not bluſh to own it.
Ven. After this
I think ſhe'll bluſh at nothing.
Cleo. You ſeem griev'd,
(And therein you are kind), that Cæſar firſt
Enjoy'd my love, though you deſerv'd it better:
I grieve for that, my Lord, much more than you;

For,

For, had I firſt been yours, it would have ſav'd
My ſecond choice: I never had been his,
And ne'er had been but yours. But Cæſar firſt,
You ſay, poſſeſs'd my love. Not ſo, my Lord:
He firſt poſſeſs'd my perſon; you my love:
Cæſar lov'd me; but I lov'd Antony.
If I endur'd him after, 'twas becauſe
I judg'd it due to the firſt name of men;
And, half conſtrain'd, I gave, as to a tyrant,
What he would take by force.

Ven. O ſyren, ſyren!
Yet grant that all the love ſhe boaſts were true,
Has ſhe not ruin'd you? I ſtill urge that,
The fatal conſequence.

Cleo. The conſequence indeed,
For I dare challenge him, my greateſt foe,
To ſay it was deſign'd: 'tis true I lov'd you,
And kept you far from an uneaſy wife,
(Such Fulvia was)
Yes, but he'll ſay, you left Octavia for me;——
And can you blame me to receive that love,
Which quitted ſuch deſert, for worthleſs me?
How often have I wiſh'd ſome other Cæſar,
Great as the firſt, and as the ſecond young,
Would court my love, to be refus'd for you!

Ven. Words, words: but Actium, Sir, remember Actium.

Cleo. Ev'n there, I dare his malice. True, I counſell'd
To fight at ſea; but I betray'd you not.
I fled, but not to th' enemy. 'Twas fear;
Would I had been a man, not to have fear'd,
For none would then have envy'd me your friendſhip,
Who envy me your love.

Ant. We're both unhappy:
If nothing elſe, yet our ill fortune parts us.
Speak; would you have me periſh, by my ſtay?

Cleo. If as a friend you aſk my judgment, Go;
If as a lover, Stay. If you muſt periſh——
'Tis a hard word; but ſtay.

Ven. See now th' effects of her ſo boaſted love!
She ſtrives to drag you down to ruin with her;
But, could ſhe 'ſcape without you, oh how ſoon

Would ſhe let go her hold, and haſte to ſhore,
And never look behind!

Cleo. Then judge my love by this.

[*Giving* Antony *a writing.*

Could I have borne
A life or death, a happineſs or woe
From yours divided, this had giv'n me means.

Ant. By Hercules, the writing of Octavius!
I know it well: 'tis that proſcribing hand,
Young as it was, that led the way to mine,
And left me but the ſecond place in murder——
See, ſee, Ventidius! here he offers Egypt,
And joins all Syria to it, as a preſent,
So, in requital, ſhe forſakes my fortunes,
And join her arms with his.

Cleo. And yet you leave me!
You leave me, Antony; and yet I love you,
Indeed I do: I have refus'd a kingdom,
That's a trifle;
For I could part with life; with any thing,
But only you. O let me die but with you!
Is that a hard requeſt?

Ant. Next living with you,
'Tis all that Heav'n can give.

Alex. He melts; we conquer. [*Aſide.*

Cleo. No: you ſhall go: your int'reſt calls you hence;
Yes; your dear int'reſt pulls too ſtrong, for theſe
Weak arms to hold you here—— [*Takes his hand.*
Go; leave me, Soldier;
(For you're no more a lover:) leave me dying:
Puſh me all pale and panting from your boſom,
And, when your march begins, let one run after
Breathleſs almoſt for joy; and cry, ſhe's dead:
The ſoldiers ſhout; you then perhaps may ſigh,
And muſter all your Roman gravity;
Ventidius chides; and ſtrait your brow clears up,
As I had never been.

Ant. Gods, 'tis too much; too much for man to bear!

Cleo. What is't for me then,
A weak forſaken woman, and a lover!——
Here let me breathe my laſt; envy me not
This minute in your arms: I'll die apace:

As

As faſt as e'er I can; and end your trouble.
Ant. Die! rather let me periſh: looſen'd Nature
Leap from its hinges, ſink the props of heav'n,
And fall the ſkies to cruſh the nether world.
My Eyes, my Soul, my All! [*Embraces her.*
Ven. And what's this toy
In balance with your fortune, honour, fame?
Ant. What is't, Ventidius? it outweighs 'em all;
Why, we have more than conquer'd Cæſar now:
My Queen's not only innocent, but loves me.
This, this is ſhe who drags me down to ruin!
But, could ſhe 'ſcape without me, with what haſte
Would ſhe let ſlip her hold, and make to ſhore,
And never look behind!
Down on thy knees, blaſphemer as thou art,
And aſk forgiveneſs of wrong'd innocence.
Vent. I'll rather die, than take it. Will you go?
Ant. Go! whither? go from all that's excellent!
Faith, honour, virtue, all good things forbid,
That I ſhould go from her, who ſets my love
Above the price of kingdoms. Give, you Gods,
Give to your boy, your Cæſar,
This rattle of a globe to play withal,
This gewgaw world, and put him cheaply off:
I'll not be pleas'd with leſs than Cleopatra.
Cleo. She's wholly yours. My heart's ſo full of joy,
That I ſhall do ſome wild extravagance
Of love, in public; and the fooliſh world,
Which knows not tenderneſs, will think me mad.
Ven. O women, women, women! all the gods
Have not ſuch power of doing good to man,
As you of doing harm. [*Exit.*
Ant. Our men are arm'd.
Unbar the gate that looks to Cæſar's camp;
I would revenge the treachery he meant me:
And long ſecurity makes conqueſt eaſy.
I'm eager to return before I go;
For, all the pleaſures I have known, beat thick
On my remembrance: how I long for night!
That both the ſweets of mutual love may try
And triumph once o'er Cæſar ere we die. [*Exeunt.*

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I.

At one door, enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, IRAS, *and* ALEXAS, *a train of* Egyptians; *At the other* ANTONY *and* Romans. *The entrance on both ſides is prepar'd by muſic; the trumpets firſt ſounding on* Antony's *part: Then anſwer'd by timbrels*, &c. *on* Cleopatra's. Charmion *and* Iras *hold a laurel wreath betwixt them. A dance of* Egyptians. *After the ceremony*, Cleopatra *crowns* Antony.

ANTONY.

I THOUGHT how thoſe white arms would fold me in,
And ſtrain me cloſe, and melt me into love;
So pleas'd with that ſweet image, I ſprung forwards,
And added all my ſtrength to every blow.

Cleo. Come to me, come, my Soldier, to my arms,
You've been too long away from my embraces;
But, when I have you faſt, and all my own,
With broken murmurs, and with amorous ſighs,
I'll ſay, you were unkind, and puniſh you,
And mark you red with many an eager kiſs.

Ant. My brighter Venus!

Cleo. O my greater Mars!

Ant. Thou join'ſt us well, my love!
Suppoſe me come from the Phlegræan plains,
Where gaſping giants lay, cleft by my ſword:
And mountain tops par'd off each other blow,
To bury thoſe I ſlew: receive me, goddeſs:
Let Cæſar ſpread his ſubtile nets, like Vulcan,
In thy embraces I would be beheld
By heav'n and earth at once;
And make their envy what they meant their ſport.
Let thoſe who took us bluſh; I would love on
With awful ſtate, regardleſs of their frowns,
As their ſuperior god.
There's no ſatiety of love, in thee;
Enjoy'd, thou ſtill art new; perpetual ſpring
Is in thy arms; the ripen'd fruit but falls,

And

And bloſſoms riſe to fill its empty place;
And I grow rich by giving.

Enter VENTIDIUS, *and ſtands apart.*

Alex. O, now the danger's paſt, your general comes,
He joins not in your joys, nor minds your triumphs;
But, with contracted brows, looks frowning on,
As envying your ſucceſs.

Ant. Now, on my ſoul, he loves me; truly loves me;
He never flatter'd me in any vice,
But awes me with his virtue: ev'n this minute
Methinks he has a right of chiding me.
Lead to the temple: I'll avoid his preſence;
It checks too ſtrong upon me. [*Exeunt the reſt.*

[*As* Antony *is going*, Ventidius *pulls him by the robe.*

Ven. Emperor!

Ant. 'Tis the old argument; I pr'ythee ſpare me.
[*Looking back.*

Ven. But this one hearing, Emperor.

Ant. Let go
My robe; or, by my father Hercules——

Ven. By Hercules's father, that's yet greater,
I bring you ſomewhat you would wiſh to know.

Ant. Thou ſee'ſt we are obſerv'd; attend me here,
And I'll return. [*Exit.*

Ven. I'm waning in his favour, yet I love him;
I love this man, who runs to meet his ruin;
And, ſure the gods, like me, are fond of him:
His virtues lie ſo mingled with his crimes,
As would confound their choice to puniſh one,
And not reward the other.

Enter ANTONY.

Ant. We can conquer,
You ſee, without your aid.
We have diſlodg'd their troops,
They look on us at diſtance, and, like curs
'Scap'd from the lions paws, they bay far off,
And lick their wounds, and faintly threaten war.
Five thouſand Romans, with their faces upward,
Lie breathleſs on the plain.

Ven. 'Tis well: and he

Who

Who loſt 'em, could have ſpar'd ten thouſand more.
Yet if, by this advantage, you could gain
An eaſier peace, while Cæſar doubts the chance
Of arms!——

Ant. O think not on't, Ventidius;
The boy purſues my ruin, he'll no peace;
His malice is conſiderate in advantage;
O, he's the cooleſt murderer, ſo ſtanch,
He kills, and keeps his temper.

Ven. Have you no friend
In all his army, who has power to move him;
Mecænas or Agrippa might do much.

Ant. They're both too deep in Cæſar's intereſts.
We'll work it out by dint of ſword, or periſh.

Ven. Fain I would find ſome other.

Ant. Thank thy love:
Some four or five ſuch victories as this
Will ſave thy farther pains.

Ven. Expect no more; Cæſar is on his guard:
I know, Sir, you have conquer'd againſt odds;
But ſtill you draw ſupplies from one poor town,
And of Egyptians: he has all the world,
And, at his beck, nations come pouring in,
To fill the gaps you make. Pray think again.

Ant. Why doſt thou drive me from myſelf, to ſearch
For foreign aids? to hunt my memory,
And range all o'er a waſte and barren place.
To find a friend? The wretched have no friends——
Yet I had one, the braveſt youth of Rome,
Whom Cæſar loves beyond the love of women.
He could reſolve his mind, as fire does wax,
From that hard rugged image melt him down,
And mould him in what ſofter form he pleas'd.

Ven. Him would I ſee; that man of all the world:
Juſt ſuch a one we want.

Ant. He lov'd me too,
I was his ſoul; he liv'd not but in me:
We were ſo clos'd within each other's breaſts,
The rivets were not found that join'd us firſt,
That does not reach us yet: we were ſo mixt,
As meeting ſtreams, both to ourſelves were loſt;
We were one maſs; we could not give or take,

But

But from the ſame; for he was I, I he.
Ven. He moves as I would wiſh him. [*Aſide.*
Ant. After this,
I need not tell his name: 'twas Dolabella.
Ven. He's now in Cæſar's camp.
Ant. No matter where,
Since he's no longer mine. He took unkindly
That I forbade him Cleopatra's ſight;
Becauſe I fear'd he lov'd her: he confeſs'd
He had a warmth, which, for my ſake he ſtifled;
For 'twere impoſſible that two, ſo one,
Should not have lov'd the ſame. When he departed,
He took no leave; and that confirm'd my thoughts.
Ven. It argues that he lov'd you more than her,
Elſe he had ſtaid; but he perceiv'd you jealous,
And would not grieve his friend. I know he loves you.
Ant. I ſhould have ſeen him then ere now.
Ven. Perhaps
He has thus long been lab'ring for your peace.
Ant. Would he were here!
Ven. Would you believe he lov'd you?
I read your anſwer in your eyes, you would.
Not to conceal it longer, he has ſent
A meſſenger from Cæſar's camp, with letters.
Ant. Let him appear.
Ven. I'll bring him inſtantly.
[*Exit* Ventidius, *and re-enters immediately with* Dolabella.
Ant. 'Tis he himſelf, himſelf, by holy Friendſhip!
[*Runs to embrace him.*
Art thou return'd at laſt, my better half;
Come, give me all myſelf.
Let me not live,
If the young bridegroom, longing for his night,
Was ever half ſo fond.
Dol. I muſt be ſilent: for my ſoul is buſy
About a nobler work: ſhe's new come home,
Like a long abſent man, and wanders o'er
Each room, a ſtranger to her own, to look
If all be ſafe.
Ant. Thou haſt what's left of me.
For I am now ſo ſunk from what I was,
Thou find'ſt me at my loweſt water-mark.
The rivers that ran in, and rais'd my fortunes,

Are

Are all dry'd up, or take another courſe:
What I have left is from my native ſpring;
I've ſtill a heart that ſwells, in ſcorn of fate,
And lifts me to my banks.
Dol. Still you are lord of all the world to me.
Ant. Why, then I yet am ſo; for thou art all.
If I had any joy when thou wert abſent,
I grudg'd it to myſelf; methought I robb'd
Thee of thy part. But, oh my Dolabella!
Thou haſt beheld me other than I am.
Haſt thou not ſeen my morning chambers fill'd
With ſcepter'd ſlaves, who waited to ſalute me?
With eaſtern monarchs, who forgot the ſun,
To worſhip my upriſing? Menial kings
Ran courſing up and down my palace-yard,
Stood ſilent in my preſence, watch'd my eyes,
And, at my leaſt command, all ſtarted out
Like racers to the goal.
Dol. Slaves to your fortune.
Ant. Fortune is Cæſar's now; and what am I?
Ven. What you have made yourſelf; I will not flatter.
Ant. Is this friendly done?
Dol. Yes, when his end is ſo, I muſt join with him;
Indeed I muſt, and yet you muſt not chide:
Why am I elſe your friend?
Ant. Take heed, young man,
How thou upbraid'ſt my love: the queen has eyes,
And thou too haſt a ſoul. Canſt thou remember
When, ſwell'd with hatred, thou beheld'ſt her firſt
As acceſſary to thy brother's death?
Dol. Spare my remembrance; 'twas a guilty day,
And ſtill the bluſh hangs here.
Ant. To clear herſelf,
For ſending him no aid, ſhe came from Egypt:
Her galley down the ſilver Cydnos row'd;
The tackling ſilk, the ſtreamers wav'd with gold;
The gentle winds were lodg'd in purple ſails:
Her nymphs, like Nereids, round her couch were plac'd,
Where ſhe, another ſea-born Venus, lay.
Dol. No more: I would not hear it.
Ant. O, you muſt!
She lay, and lean'd her cheek upon her hand,

And caſt a look ſo languiſhingly ſweet,
As if, ſecure of all beholders hearts,
Neglecting ſhe could take 'em: boys, like Cupids,
Stood fanning, with their painted wings, the winds
That play'd about her face: but if ſhe ſmil'd,
A darting glory ſeem'd to blaze abroad:
That men's deſiring eyes were never weary'd;
But hung upon the object: to ſoft flutes
The ſilver oars kept time; and while they play'd,
The hearing gave new pleaſure to the ſight;
And both to thought. 'Twas Heav'n, or ſomewhat more;
For ſhe ſo charm'd all hearts, that gazing crowds
Stood panting on the ſhore, and wanted breath
To give their welcome voice.
Then, Dolabella, where was then thy ſoul?
Was not thy fury quite diſarm'd with wonder?
Didſt thou not ſhrink behind me from thoſe eyes,
And whiſper in my ear, Oh tell her not
That I accus'd her of my brother's death?

Dol. And ſhould my weakneſs be a plea for yours?
Mine was an age when love might be excus'd,
When kindly warmth, and when my ſpringing youth
Made it a debt to Nature. Yours——

Ven. Speak boldly.

Yours, he would ſay, in your declining age,
When no more heat was left but what you forc'd,
When all the ſap was needful for the trunk,
When it went down, then they conſtrain'd the courſe,
And robb'd from Nature, to ſupply deſire;
In you (I would not uſe ſo harſh a word)
'Tis but plain dotage.

Ant. Ha!

Dol. 'Twas urg'd too home:
But yet the loſs was private that I made;
'Twas but myſelf I loſt! I loſt no legions!
I had no world to loſe, no people's love.

Ant. This from a friend?

Dol. Yes, Antony, a true one;
A friend ſo tender, that each word I ſpeak
Stabs my own heart, before it reach your ear.
O judge me not leſs kind becauſe I chide.
To Cæſar I excuſe you.

Ant. O ye Gods!
Have I then liv'd to be excus'd to Cæſar?
Dol. As to your equal.
Ant. Well, he's but my eqnal:
While I wear this, he never ſhall be more.
Dol. I bring conditions from him.
Ant. Are they noble?
Methinks thou ſhould'ſt not bring 'em elſe: yet he
Is full of deep diſſembling; knows no honour
Divided from his intereſt. Fate miſtook him;
For Nature meant him for an uſurer,
He's fit indeed to buy, not conquer kingdoms.
Ven. Then granting this,
What pow'r was theirs who wrought ſo hard a temper
To honourable terms!
Ant. It was my Dolabella, or ſome god.
Dol. Nor I; nor yet Mæcenas, nor Agrippa:
They were your enemies; and I a friend
Too weak alone; yet 'twas a Roman deed.
Ant. 'Twas like a Roman done; ſhew me that man
Who has preſerv'd my life, my love, my honour;
Let me but ſee his face.
Ven. That taſk is mine.
And, Heaven, thou know'ſt how pleaſing. [*Exit* Ven.
Dol. You'll remember
To whom you ſtand oblig'd?
Ant. When I forget it,
Be thou unkind, and that's my greateſt curſe.
My Queen ſhall thank him too.
Dol. I fear ſhe will not.
Ant. But ſhe ſhall do't; the Queen, my Dolabella!
Haſt thou not ſtill ſome grudgings of thy fever?
Dol. I would not ſee her loſt.
Ant. When I forſake her,
Leave me, my better ſtars: for ſhe has truth
Beyond her beauty. Cæſar tempted her,
At no leſs price than kingdoms, to betray me:
But ſhe reſiſted all: and yet thou chidſt me
For loving her too well. Could I do ſo?
Dol. Yes, there's my reaſon.

Re-enter VENTIDIUS, *with* OCTAVIA, *leading* Antony's *two little daughters.*

Ant. Where?——Octavia there! [*Starting back.*

Ven.

Ven. What, is ſhe poiſon to you? a diſeaſe?
Look on her, view her well, and thoſe ſhe brings;
Are they all ſtrangers to your eyes? has Nature
No ſecret call, no whiſper they are yours?
Dol. For ſhame, my Lord, if not for love, receive 'em
With kinder eyes. If you confeſs a man,
Meet 'em, embrace 'em, bid 'em welcome to you.
Your arms ſhould open even without your knowledge,
To claſp 'em in; your feet ſhould turn to wings,
To bear you to 'em; and your eyes dart out,
And aim a kiſs ere you could reach their lips.
Ant. I ſtood amaz'd to think how they came hither.
Ven. I ſent for 'em; I brought 'em in, unknown
To Cleopatra's guards.
Dol. Yet are you cold?
Octa. Thus long I have attended for my welcome;
Which, as a ſtranger, ſure I might expect.
Who am I?
Ant. Cæſar's ſiſter.
Octa. That's unkind!
Had I been nothing more than Cæſar's ſiſter,
Know, I had ſtill remain'd in Cæſar's camp;
But your Octavia, your much injur'd wife,
Tho' baniſh'd from your bed, driv'n from your houſe,
In ſpight of Cæſar's ſiſter, ſtill is yours.
'Tis true, I have a heart diſdains your coldneſs,
And prompts me not to ſeek what you ſhould offer;
But a wife's virtue ſtill ſurmounts that pride:
I come to claim you as my own; to ſhow
My duty firſt, to aſk, nay beg, your kindneſs:
Your hand, my Lord; 'tis mine, and I will have it.
[*Taking his hand.*
Ven. Do, take it, thou deſerv'ſt it.
Dol. On my ſoul,
And ſo ſhe does: ſhe's neither too ſubmiſſive,
Nor yet too haughty: but ſo juſt a mean
Shows, as it ought, a wife and Roman too.
Ant. I fear, Octavia, you have begg'd my life.
Octa. Begg'd it, my Lord?
Ant. Yes, Begg'd it, my Ambaſſadreſs,
Poorly and baſely begg'd it of your brother.

Octa. Poorly and baſely I could never beg:
Nor could my brother grant.
Ant. Shall I, who to my kneeling ſlave could ſay,
Riſe up, and be a king; ſhall I fall down
And cry, Forgive me, Cæſar? ſhall I ſet
A man, my equal, in the place of Jove,
As he could give me being? No; that word,
Forgive, would choak me up,
And die upon my tongue.
Dol. You ſhall not need it.
Ant. I will not need it. Come, you've all betray'd me;
My friend too! To receive ſome vile conditions,
My wife has bought me, with her prayers and tears;
And now I muſt become her branded ſlave.
In every peeviſh mood ſhe will upbraid
The life ſhe gave: if I but look awry,
She cries, I'll tell my brother.
Octa. My hard fortune
Subjects me ſtill to your unkind miſtakes.
But the conditions I have brought are ſuch
You need not bluſh to take: I love your honour,
Becauſe 'tis mine; it never ſhall be ſaid
Octavia's huſband was her brother's ſlave.
Sir, you are free; free, ev'n from her you loath;
For, tho' my brother bargains for your love,
Makes me the price and cement of your peace,
I have a ſoul like yours; I cannot take
Your love as alms, nor beg what I deſerve.
I'll tell my brother we are reconcil'd;
He ſhall draw back his troops, and you ſhall march
To rule the Eaſt: I may be dropt at Athens;
No matter where, I never will complain,
But only keep the barren name of wife,
And rid you of the trouble.
Ven. Was ever ſuch a ſtrife of ſullen honour!
Both ſcorn to be oblig'd.
Dol. O, ſhe has touch'd him in the tender'ſt part;
See how he reddens with deſpight and ſhame
To be outdone in generoſity!
Ven. See how he winks! how he dries up a tear,
That fain would fall!

Ant.

Ant. Octavia, I have heard you, and muſt praiſe
The greatneſs of your ſoul:
But cannot yield to what you have propos'd:
For I can ne'er be conquer'd but by love:
And you do all for duty. You would free me,
And would be dropt at Athens? was't not ſo?
Octa. It was, my Lord.
Ant. Then I muſt be oblig'd
To one who loves me not, who, to herſelf,
May call me thankleſs and ungrateful man:
I'll not endure it, no.
Ven. I'm glad it pinches there.
Octa. Would you triumph o'er poor Octavia's virtue?
That pride was all I had to bear me up;
That you might think you ow'd me for your life,
And ow'd it to my duty, not my love.
I have been injur'd, and my haughty ſoul
Could brook but ill the man who ſlights my bed.
Ant. Therefore you love me not.
Octa. Therefore, my Lord,
I ſhould not love you.
Ant. Therefore you would leave me?
Octa. And therefore I ſhould leave you—if I could.
Dol. Her ſoul's too great, after ſuch injuries,
To ſay ſhe loves; and yet ſhe let's you ſee it.
Her modeſty and ſilence plead her cauſe.
Ant. O, Dolabella, which way ſhall I turn?
I find a ſecret yielding in my ſoul;
But Cleopatra, who would die with me,
Muſt ſhe be left? Pity pleads for Octavia;
But does it not plead more for Cleopatra?
Ven. Juſtice and pity both plead for Octavia;
For Cleopatra, neither.
One would be ruin'd with you; but ſhe firſt
Had ruin'd you: the other, you have ruin'd,
And yet ſhe would preſerve you.
In every thing their merits are unequal.
Ant. O, my diſtracted ſoul!
Octa. Sweet Heav'n compoſe it.
Come, come, my Lord, if I can pardon you,
Methinks you ſhould accept it. Look on theſe;
Are they not yours? Or ſtand they thus neglected

As they are mine? Go to him, children, go;
Kneel to him, take him by the hand, ſpeak to him;
For you may ſpeak, and he may own you too,
Without a bluſh; and ſo he cannot all
His children: go, I ſay, and pull him to me,
And pull him to yourſelves, from that bad woman.
You, Agrippina, hang upon his arms;
And you, Antonia, claſp about his waiſt:
If he will ſhake you off, if he will daſh you
Againſt the pavement, you muſt bear it, children;
For you are mine, and I was born to ſuffer.

[*Here the children go to him*, &c.

Ven. Was ever ſight ſo moving! Emperor!

Dol. Friend!

Octa. Huſband!

Both. Chil. Father!

Ant. I am vanquiſh'd: take me,
Octavia; take me, children; ſhare me all.

[*Embracing them.*

I've been a thriftleſs debtor to your loves,
And run out much, in riot from your ſtock;
But all ſhall be amended.

Octa. O bleſt hour!

Dol. O happy change!

Vent. My joy ſtops at my tongue;
But it has found two channels here for one,
And bubbles out above.

Ant. to Octa.] This is thy triumph; lead me where thou wilt;
Ev'n to thy brother's camp.

Octa. All there are yours.

Enter Alexas *haſtily.*

Alex. The Queen, my miſtreſs, Sir, and yours——

Ant. 'Tis paſt. Octavia, you ſhall ſtay this night;
To-morrow, Cæſar and we are one.

[*Ex. leading* Octa. Dol. *and the children follow.*

Vent. There's news for you; run, my officious eunuch,
Be ſure to be the firſt; haſte forward:
Haſte, my dear eunuch, haſte. [*Exit.*

Alex. This downright fighting fool, this thick-ſcull'd hero,

This

This blunt unthinking inſtrument of death,
With plain dull virtue has outgone my wit:
Pleaſure forſook my earlieſt infancy.
The luxury of others robb'd my cradle,
And raviſh'd thence the promiſe of a man:
Caſt out from Nature, diſinherited
Of what her meaneſt children claim by kind;
Yet greatneſs kept me from contempt: that's gone.
Had Cleopatra follow'd my advice,
Then he had been betray'd, who now forſakes.
She dies for love; but ſhe has known its joys:
Gods, is this juſt, that I, who know no joys,
Muſt die, becauſe ſhe loves?

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, IRAS, *and Train.*

Oh, Madam, I have ſeen what blaſts my eyes!
Octavia's here!

Cleo. Peace with that raven's note.
I know it too; and now am in
The pangs of death.

Alex. You are no more a queen;
Egypt is loſt.

Cleo. What tell'ſt thou me of Egypt?
My life, my ſoul is loſt! Octavia has him!
O fatal name to Cleopatra's love!
My kiſſes, my embraces now are hers;
While I———But thou haſt ſeen my rival; ſpeak,
Does ſhe deſerve this bleſſing? Is ſhe fair?
Bright as a goddeſs? and is all perfection
Confin'd to her? It is. Poor I was made
Of that coarſe matter which, when ſhe was finiſh'd,
The gods threw by, for rubbiſh.

Alex. She is indeed a very miracle.

Cleo. Death to my hopes: a miracle!

Alex. A miracle; [*Bowing.*
I mean in goodneſs; for in beauty, Madam,
You make all wonders ceaſe.

Cleo. I was too raſh:
Take this in part of recompence. But oh,
[*Giving a ring.*
I fear thou flatter'ſt me.

Char. She comes! ſhe's here!

Iras.

Iras. Fly, Madam, Cæſar's ſiſter!
Cleo. Were ſhe the ſiſter of the thund'rer Jove,
And bore her brother's lightning in her eyes,
Thus would I face my rival.
[*Meets* OCTAVIA *with* VENTIDIUS. Octa. *bears up to her. Their trains come up on either ſide.*
Octa. I need not aſk if you are Cleopatra,
Your haughty carriage——
Cleo. Shows I am a queen:
Nor need I aſk you who you are.
Octa. A Roman:
A name that makes, and can unmake a queen.
Cleo. Your Lord, the man who ſerves me, is a Roman.
Octa. He was a Roman, till he loſt that name
To be a ſlave in Egypt; but I come
To free him thence.
Cleo. Peace, peace, my lover's Juno.
When he grew weary of that houſehold-clog,
He choſe my eaſier bonds.
Octa. I wonder not
Your bonds are eaſy; you have long been practis'd
In that laſcivious art: he's not the firſt
For whom you ſpread your ſnares: let Cæſar witneſs.
Cleo. I lov'd not Cæſar; 'twas but gratitude
I paid his love: the worſt your malice can,
Is but to ſay the greateſt of mankind
Has been my ſlave. The next, but far above him
In my eſteem, is he whom law calls yours,
But whom his love made mine.
Octa. I would view nearer [*Coming up cloſe to her.*
That face, which has ſo long uſurp'd my right,
To find th' inevitable charms, that catch
Mankind ſo ſure, and ruin'd my dear Lord.
Cleo. O, you do well to ſearch; for had you known
But half theſe charms, you had not loſt his heart.
Octa. Far be their knowledge from a Roman lady,
Far from a modeſt wife. Shame of our ſex,
Doſt thou not bluſh, to own thoſe black endearments
That make ſin pleaſing?
Cleo. You may bluſh, who want 'em.
If bounteous Nature, if indulgent Heav'n
Have giv'n me charms to pleaſe the braveſt man;

Should

Should I not thank 'em? ſhould I be aſham'd,
And not be proud? I am, that he has lov'd me;
And when I love him not, Heav'n change this face
For one like that.
Octa. Thou lov'ſt him not ſo well.
Cleo. I love him better, and deſerve him more.
Octa. You do not; cannot: you have been his ruin.
Who made him cheap at Rome, but Cleopatra?
Who made him ſcorn'd abroad, but Cleopatra?
At Actium, who betray'd him? Cleopatra.
Who made his children orphans, and poor me
A wretched widow? only Cleopatra.
Cleo. Yet ſhe who loves him beſt is Cleopatra.
If you have ſuffer'd, I have ſuffer'd more.
You bear the ſpecious title of a wife,
To gild your cauſe, and draw the pitying world
To favour it: the world contemns poor me;
For I have loſt my honour, loſt my fame,
And ſtain'd the glory of my royal houſe,
And all to bear the branded name of miſtreſs.
There wants but life, and that too I would loſe
For him I love.
Octa. Be't ſo then; take thy wiſh. [*Exit cum ſuis.*
Cleo. And 'tis my wiſh,
Now he is loſt for whom alone I liv'd.
My ſight grows dim, and every object dances,
And ſwims before me in the maze of death.
My ſpirits, while they were oppos'd, kept up;
They could not ſink beneath a rival's ſcorn:
But now ſhe's gone they faint.
Alex. Mine have had leiſure
To recollect their ſtrength, and furniſh counſel
To ruin her, who elſe muſt ruin you.
Cleo. Vain promiſer!
Lead me, my Charmion; nay, your hand too, Iras;
My grief has weight enough to ſink you both.
Conduct me to ſome ſolitary chamber,
And draw the curtains round;
Then leave me to myſelf, to take alone
My fill of grief:
There I till death will his unkindneſs weep:
As harmleſs infants moan themſelves aſleep. [*Exeunt.*

ACT

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter Antony *and* Dolabella.

Dolabella.

WHY would you ſhift it from yourſelf, on me?
Can you not tell her you muſt part?
Ant. I cannot.
I could pull out an eye, and bid it go,
And t'other ſhould not weep. Oh, Dolabella,
How many deaths are in this word *depart!*
I dare not truſt my tongue to tell her ſo:
One look of hers will thaw me into tears,
And I ſhould melt till I were loſt again.
Dol. Then let Ventidius;
He's rough by nature.
Ant. Oh, he'll ſpeak too harſhly;
He'll kill her with the news: thou, only thou.
Dol. Nature has caſt me in ſo ſoft a mould,
That but to hear a ſtory feign'd for pleaſure
Of ſome ſad lover's death, moiſtens my eyes,
And robs me of my manhood.——I ſhould ſpeak
So faintly, with ſuch fear to grieve her heart,
She'd not believe it earneſt.
Ant. Therefore, therefore
Thou, only thou art fit: think thyſelf me,
And when thou ſpeak'ſt, (but let it firſt be long,)
Take off the edge from every ſharper ſound,
And let our parting be as gently made
As other loves begin: wilt thou do this?
Dol. What you have ſaid, ſo ſinks into my ſoul,
That if I muſt ſpeak, I ſhall ſpeak juſt ſo.
Ant. I leave you then to your ſad taſk: farewell.
I ſent her word to meet you.
[*Goes to the door, and comes back.*
I forgot:
Let her be told, I'll make her peace with mine:
Her crown and dignity ſhall be preſerv'd,

If

If I have pow'r with Cæſar———O, be ſure
To think on that.

Dol. Fear not, I will remember.

[Antony *goes again to the door, and comes back.*

Ant. And tell her, too, how much I was conſtrain'd;
I did not this, but with extremeſt force;
Deſire her not to hate my memory,
For I ſtill cheriſh hers;——inſiſt on that.

Dol. Truſt me, I'll not forget it.

Ant. Then that's all. [*Goes out, and returns again.*
Wilt thou forgive my fondneſs this once more?
Tell her, tho' we ſhall never meet again,
If I ſhould hear ſhe took another love,
The news would break my heart. —— Now, I muſt go;
For every time I have return'd, I feel
My ſoul more tender; and my next command
Would be to bid her ſtay, and ruin both. [*Exit.*

Dol. Men are but children of a larger growth,
Our appetites as apt to change as theirs,
And full as craving too, and full as vain;
And yet the ſoul, ſhut up in her dark room,
Viewing ſo clear abroad, at home ſees nothing;
But, like a mole in earth, buſy and blind,
Works all her folly up, and caſts it outward
To the world's open view: thus I diſcover'd,
And blam'd the love of ruin'd Antony;
Yet wiſh that I were he, to be ſo ruin'd.

Enter VENTIDIUS *above.*

Ven. Alone? and talking to himſelf? concern'd too?
Perhaps my gueſs is right; he lov'd her once,
And may purſue it ſtill.

Dol. O Friendſhip, Friendſhip!
Ill canſt thou anſwer this; and Reaſon, worſe:
Unfaithful in th' attempt; hopeleſs to win:
And if I win, undone: mere madneſs all.
And yet th' occaſion's fair. What injury
To him, to wear the robe which he throws by?

Ven. None, none at all. This happens as I wiſh,
To ruin her yet more with Antony.

Enter

Enter CLEOPATRA, *talking with* ALEXAS; CHARMION, IRAS *on the other ſide.*

Dol. She comes! What charms have ſorrow on that face!
Sorrow ſeems pleas'd to dwell with ſo much ſweetneſs;
Yet now and then a melancholy ſmile
Breaks looſe, like lightning, in a winter's night,
And ſhows a moment's day.
Ven. If ſhe ſhould love him too! her eunuch there!
That Porc'piſce bodes ill weather. Draw, draw nearer,
Sweet devil, that I may hear.
Alex. Believe me: try
[Dolabella *goes over to* Charmion *and* Iras; *ſeems to talk with them.*
To make him jealous; jealouſy is like
A poliſh'd glaſs held to the lips when life's in doubt:
If there be breath, 'twill catch the damp and ſhow it.
Cleo. I grant you jealouſy's a proof of love,
But 'tis a weak and unavailing medicine;
It puts out the diſeaſe, and makes it ſhow,
But has no pow'r to cure.
Alex. 'Tis your laſt remedy, and ſtrongeſt too:
And then this Dolabella, who ſo fit
To practiſe on? He's handſome, valiant, young,
And looks as he were laid for Nature's bait,
To catch weak women's eyes.
He ſtands already more than half ſuſpected
Of loving you: the leaſt kind word or glance
You give this youth, will kindle him with love:
Then, like a burning veſſel, ſet adrift,
You'll ſend him down amain before the wind,
To fire the heart of jealous Antony.
Cleo. Can I do this? Ah, no; my love's ſo true,
That I can neither hide it where it is,
Nor ſhow it where it is not. Nature meant me
A wife; a ſilly, harmleſs, houſehold dove,
Fond without art, and kind without deceit;
But Fortune, that has made a miſtreſs of me,
Has thruſt me out to the wide world, unfurniſh'd
Of falſehood to be happy.
Alex. Force yourſelf.
Th' event will be, your lover will return

Doubly desirous to possess the good
Which once he fear'd to lose.
Cleo. I must attempt it;
But oh with what regret!
[*Exit* Alexas. (*She comes up to* Dolabella.)
Ven. So, now the scene draws near; they're in my reach.
Cleo. to Dol.] Discoursing with my woman! Might not I
Share in your entertainment?
Char. You have been
The subject of it, Madam.
Cleo. How! and how?
Iras. Such praises of your beauty!
Cleo. Mere poetry.
Your Roman wits, your Gallus and Tibullus,
Have taught you this from Cytheris and Delia.
Dol. Those Roman wits have never been in Egypt,
Cytheris and Delia else had been unsung:
I, who have been——had I been born a poet,
Should chuse a nobler name.
Cleo. You flatter me;
But 'tis your nation's vice: all of your country
Are flatterers, and all false. Your friend's like you.
I'm sure he sent you not to speak these words.
Dol. No, Madam; yet he sent me———
Cleo. Well, he sent you———
Dol. Of a less pleasing errand.
Cleo. How less pleasing?
Less to yourself, or me?
Dol. Madam, to both;
For you must mourn, and I must grieve to cause it.
Cleo. You, Charmion and your fellow, stand at distance.
Hold up, my spirits [*Aside.*]——Well, now your mournful matter;
For I'm prepar'd, perhaps can guess it too.
Dol I wish you would; for 'tis a thankless office
To tell ill news; and I, of all your sex,
Most fear displeasing you.
Cleo. Of all your sex,
I soonest could forgive you, if you should.

Ven. Moſt delicate advances! woman, woman!
Dear, damn'd, inconſtant ſex!
Cleo. In the firſt place,
I am to be forſaken; is't not ſo?
Dol. I wiſh I could not anſwer to that queſtion.
Cleo. Then paſs it o'er, becauſe it troubles you:
I ſhould have been more griev'd another time.
Next, I'm to loſe my kingdom——Farewell, Egypt.
Yet, is there any more?
Dol. Madam, I fear
Your too deep ſenſe of grief has turn'd your reaſon.
Cleo. No, no, I'm not run mad; I can bear fortune;
And love may be expell'd by other love,
As poiſons are by poiſons.
Dol. ——— You o'erjoy me, Madam.
To find your griefs ſo moderately borne.
You've heard the worſt; all are not falſe, like him.
Cleo. No; Heav'n forbid they ſhould.
Dol. Some men are conſtant.
Cleo. And conſtancy deſerves reward, that's certain.
Dol. Deſerves it not; but give it leave to hope.
Ven. I'll ſwear thou haſt my leave. I have enough:
But how to manage this! well, I'll conſider.
Dol. I came prepar'd
To tell you heavy news; news, which I thought
Would fright the blood from your pale cheeks to hear:
But you have met it with a cheerfulneſs
That makes my taſk more eaſy; and my tongue,
Which on another's meſſage was employed,
Would gladly ſpeak its own.
Cleo. Hold, Dolabella.
Firſt tell me, were you choſen by my Lord?
Or ſought you this employment?
Dol. He pick'd me out; and, as his boſom-friend,
He charg'd me with his words.
Cleo. The meſſage then
I know was tender, and each accent ſmooth,
To mollify that rugged word *depart*.
Dol. Oh, you miſtake: he choſe the harſheſt words,
With fiery eyes, and with contracted brows,
He coin'd his face in the ſevereſt ſtamp:
And fury ſhook his fabric like an earthquake;

He

He heav'd for vent, and burſt like bellowing Ætna,
In ſounds ſcarce human, " Hence, away for ever:
" Let her begone, the blot of my renown,
" And bane of all my hopes:
[*All the time of this ſpeech*, Cleopatra *ſeems more and more concern'd, till ſhe ſinks quite down.*
" Let her be driven as far as men can think
" From man's commerce: ſhe'll poiſon to the center."
Cleo. Oh, I can bear no more! [*Faints.*
Dol. Help, help! Oh wretch! Oh, curſed, curſed wretch!
What have I done?
Char. Help, chafe her temples, Iras.
Iras. Bend, bend her forward quickly.
Char. Heav'n be prais'd,
She comes again.
Cleo. Oh, let him not approach me.
Why have you brought me back to this loath'd being,
Th' abode of falſehood, violated vows,
And injur'd love? for pity, let me go;
For if there be a place of long repoſe,
I'm ſure I want it. My diſdainful Lord
Can never break that quiet; nor awake
The ſleeping ſoul, with hollowing in my tomb
Such words as fright her hence. Unkind, unkind!
Dol. Believe me, 'tis againſt myſelf I ſpeak, [*Kneeling.*
That ſure deſerves belief: I injur'd him:
My friend ne'er ſpoke thoſe words. Oh, had you ſeen
How often he came back, and every time
With ſomething more obliging and more kind,
To add to what he ſaid; what dear farewells;
How almoſt vanquiſh'd by his love he parted,
And lean'd to what unwillingly he left:
I, traitor as I was, for love of you,
(But what can you not do, who made me falſe?)
I forg'd that lie; for whoſe forgiveneſs kneels
This ſelf-accus'd, ſelf-puniſh'd criminal.
Cleo. With how much eaſe believe we what we wiſh!
Riſe, Dolabella; if you have been guilty,
I have contributed, and too much love
Has made me guilty too.
Th' advance of kindneſs which I made, was feign'd,

To call back fleeting love by jealouſy;
But 'twould not laſt. Oh, rather let me loſe,
Than ſo ignobly trifle with his heart.
Dol. I find your breaſt fenc'd round from human reach,
Tranſparent as a rock of ſolid chryſtal;
Seen through, but never pierc'd. My friend, my friend!
What endleſs treaſures haſt thou thrown away;
And ſcatter'd, like an infant, in the ocean,
Vain ſums of wealth which none can gather thence?
Cleo. Could you not beg
An hour's admittance to his private ear?
Like one who wanders through long barren wilds,
And yet foreknows no hoſpitable inn
Is near to ſuccour hunger,
Eats his fill, before his painful march:
So would I feed a while my famiſh'd eyes
Before we part; for I have far to go,
If death be far, and never muſt return.

VENTIDIUS, *with* OCTAVIA *behind.*

Ven. From hence you may diſcover; Oh, ſweet, ſweet!
Would you indeed? the pretty hand in earneſt?
Dol. I will, for this reward. [*Takes her hand.*
——Draw it not back, 'tis all I e'er will beg.
Ven. They turn upon us.
Octa. What quick eyes have guilt?
Ven. Seem not to have obſerv'd them, and go on.

They enter.

Dol. Saw you the Emperor, Ventidius?
Ven. No;
I ſought him, but I heard that he was private,
None with him, but Hipparchus his freedman.
Dol Know you his buſ'neſs?
Ven. Giving him inſtructions,
And letters to his brother Cæſar.
Dol. Well,
He muſt be found. [*Exeunt* Dol. *and* Cleo.
Octa. Moſt glorious impudence!
Ven. She look'd methought
As ſhe would ſay, Take your old man, Octavia;

Thank

Thank you, I'm better here. Well, but what uſe
Make we of this diſcovery?

Octa. Let it die.

Ven. I pity Dolabella; but ſhe's dangerous:
Her eyes have pow'r beyond Theſſalian charms
To draw the moon from heav'n; for eloquence,
The ſea-green ſyrens taught her voice their flatt'ry;
And, while ſhe ſpeaks, night ſteals upon the day,
Unmark'd of thoſe that hear: then ſhe's ſo charming,
Age buds at ſight of her, and ſwells to youth:
The holy prieſts gaze on her when ſhe ſmiles;
And with heav'd hands forgetting gravity,
They bleſs her wanton eyes: ev'n I who hate her,
With a malignant joy behold ſuch beauty;
And while I curſe, deſire it. Antony
Muſt needs have ſome remains of paſſion ſtill,
Which may ferment into a worſe relapſe,
If now not fully cur'd. I know, this minute,
With Cæſar he's endeavouring her peace.

Octa. You have prevail'd:———But for a further purpoſe [*Walks off.*
I'll prove how he will reliſh this diſcovery.
What, make a ſtrumpet's peace! it ſwells my heart:
It muſt not, ſhall not be.

Ven. His guards appear,
Let me begin, and you ſhall ſecond me.

Enter ANTONY.

Ant. Octavia, I was looking for you, my love:
What, are your letters ready? I have giv'n
My laſt inſtructions.

Octa. Mine, my Lord, are written.

Ant. Ventidius. [*Drawing him aſide.*

Ven. My Lord?

Ant. A word in private.
When ſaw you Dolabella?

Ven. Now, my Lord,
He parted hence; and Cleopatra with him.

Ant. Speak ſoftly. 'Twas by my command he went,
To bear my laſt farewell.

Ven. It look'd indeed [*Aloud.*
Like your farewell.

Ant. More ſoftly——My farewell?
What ſecret meaning have you in thoſe words
Of my farewell? He did it by my order.
Ven. Then he obey'd your order. I ſuppoſe [*Aloud.*
You bid him do it with all gentleneſs,
All kindneſs, and all——love.
Ant. How ſhe mourn'd,
The poor forſaken creature!
Ven. She took it as ſhe ought; ſhe bore your parting
As ſhe did Cæſar's, as ſhe would another's,
Were a new love to come.
Ant. Thou doſt bely her; [*Aloud.*
Moſt baſely and maliciouſly bely her.
Ven. I thought not to diſpleaſe you; I have done.
Octa. You ſeem diſturb'd, my Lord. [*Coming up.*
Ant. A very trifle.
Retire, my love.
Ven. It was indeed a trifle.
He ſent——
Ant. No more. Look how thou diſobey'ſt me; *Angrily.*
Thy life ſhall anſwer it.
Octa. Then 'tis no trifle.
Ven. to Octa.] 'Tis leſs; a very nothing: you too ſaw it,
As well as I; and therefore 'tis no ſecret.
Ant. She ſaw it!
Ven. Yes: ſhe ſaw young Dolabella——
Ant. Young Dolabella!
Ven. Young, I think him young,
And handſome too; and ſo do others think him.
But what of that? He went by your command,
Indeed 'tis probable, with ſome kind meſſage;
For ſhe receiv'd it graciouſly; ſhe ſmil'd:
And then he grew familiar with her hand,
Squeez'd it, and worry'd it with ravenous kiſſes;
She bluſh'd, and ſigh'd, and ſmil'd, and bluſh'd again;
At laſt ſhe took occaſion to talk ſoftly,
And brought her cheek up cloſe, and lean'd on his:
At which he whiſper'd kiſſes back on hers;
And then ſhe cry'd aloud, That conſtancy
Should be rewarded.

Octa.

Octa. This I ſaw and heard.
Ant. What woman was it whom you heard and ſaw
So playful with my friend! Not Cleopatra?
Ven. Ev'n ſhe, my Lord!
Ant. My Cleopatra?
Ven Your Cleopatra;
Dolabella's Cleopatra;
Every man's Cleopatra.
Ant. Thou ly'ſt.
Ven. I do not lie, my Lord.
Is this ſo ſtrange? Should miſtreſſes be left,
And not provide againſt a time of change?
You know ſhe's not much us'd to lonely nights.
Ant. I'll think no more on't.
I know 'tis falſe, and ſee the plot betwixt you.
You needed not have gone this way, Octavia.
What harms it you that Cleopatra's juſt?
She's mine no more. I ſee; and I forgive:
Urge it no farther, Love.
Octa. Are you concern'd
That ſhe's found falſe?
Ant. I ſhould be, were it ſo;
For though 'tis paſt, I would not that the world
Should tax my former choice, that I lov'd one
Of ſo light note; but I forgive you both.
Ven. What has my age deſerv'd, that you ſhould think
I would abuſe your ears with perjury?
If Heav'n be true, ſhe's falſe.
Ant. Tho' Heav'n and earth
Should witneſs, I'll not believe her tainted.
Vent. I'll bring you then a witneſs
From hell to prove her ſo. Nay, go not back;

Seeing ALEXAS *juſt entering, and ſtarting back.*

For ſtay you muſt and ſhall.
Alex. What means my Lord?
Ven. To make you do what moſt you hate; ſpeak truth.
You are of Cleopatra's private counſel,
Of her bed-counſel, her laſcivious hours;
Are conſcious of each nightly change ſhe makes,
And watch her, as Chaldeans do the moon,
Can tell what ſigns ſhe paſſes thro', what day.

Alex.

Alex. My noble Lord.

Ven. My moſt illuſtrious pandar,
No fine ſet ſpeech, no cadence, no turn'd periods,
But a plain home ſpun truth is what I aſk:
I did, myſelf, o'erhear your queen make love
To Dolabella. Speak; for I will know,
By your confeſſion, what more paſt betwixt 'em;
How near the buſineſs draws to your employment;
And when the happy hour.

Ant. Speak truth, Alexas: whether it offend
Or pleaſe Ventidius, care not: juſtify
Thy injur'd queen from malice: dare his worſt.

Octa. aſide.] See how he gives him courage, how he fears
To find her falſe! and ſhuts his eyes to truth,
Willing to be miſled!

Alex. As far as love may plead for woman's frailty,
Urg'd by deſert and greatneſs of the lover;
So far (divine Octavia) may my queen
Stand ev'n excus'd to you, for loving him,
Who is your lord: ſo far, from brave Ventidius,
May her paſt actions hope a fair report.

Ant. 'Tis well, and truly ſpoken: mark, Ventidius.

Alex. To you, moſt noble Emperor, her ſtrong paſſion
Stands not excus'd, but wholly juſtified.
Her beauty's charms alone, without her crown,
From Ind and Meroe drew the diſtant vows
Of ſighing kings; and at her feet were laid
The ſcepters of the earth, expos'd on heaps,
To chuſe where ſhe would reign;
She thought a Roman only could deſerve her,
And, of all Romans, only Antony;
And, to be leſs than wife to you, diſdain'd
Their lawful paſſion.

Ant. 'Tis but truth.

Alex. And yet, tho' love, and your unmatch'd deſert,
Have drawn her from the due regard of honour,
At laſt Heav'n open'd her unwilling eyes
To ſee the wrongs ſhe offer'd fair Octavia,
Whoſe holy bed ſhe lawleſsly uſurp'd.
The ſad effects of this unproſperous war,
Confirm'd thoſe pious thoughts.

Ven.

Ven. aſide.] O, wheel you there?
Obſerve him now; the man begins to mend,
And talk ſubſtantial reaſon. Fear not, eunuch,
The Emperor has giv'n thee leave to ſpeak.
Alex. Elſe had I never dar'd t' offend his ears
With what the laſt neceſſity has urg'd
On my forſaken miſtreſs; yet I muſt not
Preſume to ſay her heart is wholly alter'd.
Ant. No, dare not for thy life, I charge thee dare not
Pronounce that fatal word.
Octa. Muſt I bear this? Good Heav'n afford me patience. [*Aſide.*
Ven. On, ſweet eunuch; my dear half man, proceed.
Alex. Yet Dolabella
Has lov'd her long; he, next my godlike lord,
Deſerves her beſt; and ſhould ſhe meet his paſſion,
Rejected, as ſhe is, by him ſhe lov'd——
Ant. Hence, from my ſight; for I can bear no more:
Let furies drag thee quick to hell; let all
The longer damn'd have reſt; each torturing hand
Do thou employ, till Cleopatra comes;
Then join thou too, and help to torture her.
[*Exit* Alexas, *thruſt out by* Antony.
Octa. 'Tis not well,
Indeed, my Lord, 'tis much unkind to me,
To ſhow this paſſion, this extreme concernment
For an abandon'd, faithleſs proſtitute.
Ant. Octavia, leave me: I am much diſorder'd.
Leave me, I ſay.
Octa. My Lord!
Ant. I bid you leave me.
Ven. Obey him, Madam: beſt withdraw a while,
And ſee how this will work.
Octa. Wherein have I offended you, my Lord,
That I am bid to leave you? Am I falſe,
Or infamous? Am I a Cleopatra?
Were I ſhe,
Baſe as ſhe is, you would not bid me leave you;
But hang upon my neck, take ſlight excuſes,
And fawn upon my falſehood.
Ant. 'Tis too much,
Too much, Octavia; I am preſt with ſorrows

Too

Too heavy to be borne; and you add more:
I would retire, and recollect what's left
Of man within, to aid me.
Octa. You would mourn
In private for your Love, who has betray'd you.
You did but half return to me: your kindness
Linger'd behind with her. I hear, my Lord,
You make conditions for her,
And would incline her treaty. Wond'rous proofs
Of love to me!
Ant. Are you my friend, Ventidius?
Or are you turn'd a Dolabella too,
And let this fury loose?
Ven. Oh, be advis'd,
Sweet Madam, and retire.
Octa. Yes, I will go; but never to return;
You shall no more be haunted with this fury.
My Lord, my Lord, love will not always last,
When urg'd with long unkindness and disdain:
Take her again whom you prefer to me;
She stays but to be call'd. Poor cozen'd man!
Let a feign'd parting give her back your heart,
Which a feign'd love first got; for injur'd me,
Though my just sense of wrongs forbid my stay,
My duty shall be yours.
To the dear pledges of our former love,
My tenderness and care shall be transferr'd,
And they shall cheer, by turns, my widow'd nights:
So take my last farewell; for I despair
To have you whole, and scorn to take you half. [*Exit.*
Ven. I combat Heav'n, which blasts my best designs:
My last attempt must be to win her back;
But oh, I fear in vain. [*Exit.*
Ant. Why was I fram'd with this plain honest heart,
Which knows not to disguise its griefs and weakness,
But bears its workings outward to the world?
I should have kept the mighty anguish in,
And forc'd a smile at Cleopatra's falsehood:
Octavia had believ'd it, and had staid.
But I am made a shallow-forded stream,
Seen to the bottom; all my clearness scorn'd,
And all my faults expos'd—See where he comes,

Enter

Enter DOLABELLA.

Who has prophan'd the ſacred name of friend,
And worn it into vileneſs!
With how ſecure a brow, and ſpecious form
He gilds the ſecret villain! ſure that face
Was meant for honeſty; but Heav'n miſ-match'd it,
And furniſh'd treaſon out with nature's pomp,
To make its work more eaſy.
Dol. O, my friend!
Ant. Well, Dolabella, you perform'd my meſſage?
Dol. I did, unwillingly.
Ant. Unwillingly!
Was it ſo hard for you to bear our parting?
You ſhould have wiſh'd it.
Dol. Why?
Ant. Becauſe you love me.
And ſhe receiv'd my meſſage with as true,
With as unfeign'd a ſorrow as you brought it?
Dol. She loves you, ev'n to madneſs.
Ant. Oh, I know it.
You, Dolabella, do not better know
How much ſhe loves me. And ſhould I
Forſake this beauty? this all-perfect creature?
Dol. I could not, were ſhe mine.
Ant. And yet you firſt
Perſuaded me: how come you alter'd ſince?
Dol. I ſaid at firſt I was not fit to go:
I could not bear her ſigh, and ſee her tears,
But pity muſt prevail: and ſo, perhaps,
It may again with you; for I have promis'd
That ſhe ſhould take her laſt farewell: and, ſee,
She comes to claim my word.

Enter CLEOPATRA.

Ant. Falſe Dolabella!
Dol. What's falſe, my Lord?
Ant. Why, Dolabella's falſe,
And Cleopatra's falſe; both falſe and faithleſs.
Draw near, you well-join'd wickedneſs, you ſerpents,
Whom I have in my friendly boſom warm'd,
Till I am ſtung to death.

Dol.

Dol. My Lord, have I
Deſerv'd to be thus us'd?
Cleo. Can Heav'n prepare
A newer torment? Can it find a curſe
Beyond our ſeparation?
Ant. Yes, if Fate
Be juſt, much greater: Heav'n ſhould be ingenious
In puniſhing ſuch crimes. The rolling ſtone,
And gnawing vulture, were ſlight pains invented
When Jove was young, and no examples known
Of mighty ills; but you have ripen'd ſin
To ſuch a monſtrous growth, 'twill poſe the gods
To find an equal torture. Two, two ſuch,
Oh! there's no farther name, two ſuch—to me,
To me, who lock'd my ſoul within your breaſts,
Had no deſires, no joys, no life, but you:
When half the globe was mine, I gave it you
In dowry with my heart; I had no uſe,
No fruit of all, but you: a friend and miſtreſs
Was what the world could give: Oh, Cleopatra!
Oh! Dolabella! how cou'd you betray
This tender heart, which with an infant-fondneſs
Lay lull'd betwixt your boſoms, and there ſlept
Secure of injur'd faith?
Dol. If ſhe has wrong'd you,
Heav'n, hell, and you revenge it.
Ant. If ſhe has wrong'd me!
Thou would'ſt evade thy part of guilt; but ſwear
Thou lov'ſt not her.
Dol. Not ſo as I love you.
Ant. Not ſo! Swear, ſwear, I ſay, thou doſt not love her.
Dol. No more than friendſhip will allow.
Ant. No more?
Friendſhip allows thee nothing: thou art perjur'd——
And yet thou didſt not ſwear thou lov'dſt her not;
But not ſo much, no more. Oh trifling hypocrite,
Who dar'ſt not own to her thou doſt not love,
Nor own to me thou doſt! Ventidius heard it;
Octavia ſaw it.
Cleo. They are enemies.
Ant. Alexas is not ſo: he, he confeſs'd it;

He who, next hell, beſt knew it, he avow'd it.
Why do I ſeek a proof beyond yourſelf? [*To* Dol.
You whom I ſent to bear my laſt farewell,
Return'd to plead her ſtay.
Dol. What ſhall I anſwer?
If to have lov'd be guilt, then I have ſinn'd;
But if to have repented of that love
Can waſh away my crime, I have repented.
Yet, if I have offended paſt forgiveneſs,
Let her not ſuffer: ſhe is innocent.
Cleo. Ah, what will not a woman do who loves!
What means will ſhe refuſe, to keep that heart
Where all her joys are plac'd! 'Twas I encourag'd,
'Twas I blew up the fire that ſcorch'd his ſoul,
To make you jealous; and, by that, regain you.
But all in vain; I could not counterfeit:
In ſpite of all the dams, my love broke o'er,
And drown'd my heart again; Fate took th' occaſion,
And thus one minute's feigning has deſtroy'd
My whole life's truth.
Ant. Thin cobweb arts of falſehood;
Seen, and broke through at firſt.
Dol. Forgive your miſtreſs.
Cleo. Forgive your friend.
Ant. You have convinc'd yourſelves,
You plead each other's cauſe: what witneſs have you,
That you but meant to raiſe my jealouſy?
Cleo. Ourſelves and Heav'n.
Ant. Guilt witneſſes for guilt. Hence, love and friendſhip;
You have no longer place in human breaſts,
Theſe two have driv'n you out: avoid my ſight;
I would not kill the man whom I have lov'd;
And cannot hurt the woman; but avoid me.
I do not know how long I can be tame;
For, if I ſtay one minute more to think
How I am wrong'd, my juſtice and revenge
Will cry ſo loud within me, that my pity
Will not be heard for either.
Dol. Heaven has but
Our ſorrow for our ſins; and then delights
To pardon erring man: ſweet mercy ſeems

Its darling attribute, which limits juſtice;
As if there were degrees in infinite;
And infinite would rather want perfection,
Than puniſh to extent.
Ant. I can forgive
A foe, but not a miſtreſs, and a friend:
Treaſon is there in its moſt horrid ſhape,
Where truſt is greateſt: and the ſoul reſign'd
Is ſtabb'd by its own guards: I'll hear no more;
Hence from my ſight for ever.
Cleo. How! for ever!
I cannot go one moment from your ſight,
And muſt I go for ever?
My joys, my only joys are center'd here:
What place have I to go to? my own kingdom?
That I have loſt for you: or to the Romans?
They hate me for your ſake: or muſt I wander
The wide world o'er, a helpleſs, baniſh'd woman?
Baniſh'd for love of you; baniſh'd from you;
Ay, there's the baniſhment! Oh, hear me, hear me,
With ſtricteſt juſtice; for I beg no favour:
And if I have offended you, then kill me,
But do not baniſh me.
Ant. I muſt not hear you.
I have a fool within me takes your part;
But Honour ſtops my ears.
Cleo. For pity hear me!
Would you caſt off a ſlave who follow'd you,
Who crouch'd beneath your ſpurn?—He has no pity!
See, if he gives one tear to my departure;
One look, one kind farewell: oh, iron heart!
Let all the gods look down, and judge betwixt us,
If he did ever love!
Ant. No more: Alexas.
Dol A perjur'd villain!
Ant. to Cleo.] Your Alexas; yours.
Cleo. O, 'twas his plot, his ruinous deſign
T' engage you in my love by jealouſy.
Hear him; confront him with me; let him ſpeak.
Ant. I have, I have.
Cleo. And if he clear me not——
Ant. Your creature! one who hangs upon your ſmiles!

Watches

Watches your eye, to ſay or to unſay
Whate'er you pleaſe! I am not to be mov'd.
Cleo. Then muſt we part? Farewell, my cruel Lord,
Th' appearance is againſt me; and I go
Unjuſtify'd for ever from your ſight.
How I have lov'd, you know; how yet I love,
My only comfort is, I know myſelf:
I love you more, ev'n now you are unkind,
Than when you lov'd me moſt; ſo well, ſo truly,
I'll never ſtrive againſt it; but die pleas'd
To think you once were mine.
Ant. Good Heav'n! they weep at parting.
Muſt I weep too? That calls them innocent.
I muſt not weep; and yet I muſt, to think
That I muſt not forgive——
Live, but live wretched; 'tis but juſt you ſhould,
Who made me ſo: live from each other's ſight:
Let me not hear you meet. Set all the earth,
And all the ſeas, betwixt your ſunder'd loves:
View nothing common but the ſun and ſkies:
Now, all take ſeveral ways;

And each your own ſad fate with mine deplore;
That you were falſe, and I could truſt no more.

[*Exeunt ſeverally.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, *and* IRAS.

CHARMION.

BE juſter, Heav'n: ſuch virtue puniſh'd thus,
Will make us think that Chance rules all above,
And ſhuffles, with a random hand, the lots
Which man is forc'd to draw.
Cleo. I could tear out theſe eyes that gain'd his heart,
And had not pow'r to keep it. O the curſe
Of doating on, ev'n when I find it dotage!
Bear witneſs, gods, you heard him bid me go;
You whom he mock'd with imprecating vows

Of promis'd faith.———I'll die, I will not bear it.
You may hold me——
[*She pulls out her dagger, and they hold her.*
But I can keep my breath: I can die inward,
And choak this love.

Enter Alexas.

Iras. Help, O Alexas, help!
The Queen grows deſperate, her ſoul ſtruggles in her,
With all the agonies of love and rage,
And ſtrives to force its paſſage.
Cleo. Let me go.
Art thou there, traitor!——O,
O for a little breath, to vent my rage!
Give, give me way, and let me looſe upon him.
Alex. Yes, I deſerve it for my ill-tim'd truth.
Was it for me to prop
The ruins of a falling Majeſty?
To place myſelf beneath the mighty flaw,
Thus to be cruſh'd, and pounded into atoms,
By its o'erwhelming weight? 'tis too preſuming
For ſubjects, to preſerve that wilful pow'r
Which courts its own deſtruction.
Cleo. I would reaſon
More calmly with you. Did you not o'er-rule,
And force my plain direct and open love
Into theſe crooked paths of jealouſy?
Now, what's the event? Octavia is remov'd;
But Cleopatra's baniſh'd. Thou, thou, villain,
Haſt puſh'd my boat to open ſea; to prove,
At my ſad coſt, if thou canſt ſteer it back.
It cannot be; I'm loſt too far; I'm ruin'd:
Hence, thou impoſtor, traitor, monſter, devil——
I can no more: thou, and my griefs have ſunk
Me down ſo low, that I want voice to curſe thee.
Alex. Suppoſe ſome ſhipwreck'd ſeaman near the ſhore,
Dropping and faint, with climbing up the cliff,
If, from above, ſome charitable hand
Pull him to ſafety, hazarding himſelf
To draw the other's weight; would he look back
And curſe him for his pains? the caſe is yours;
But one ſtep more, and you have gain'd the height.

Cleo.

Cleo. Sunk, never more to riſe.
Alex. Octavia's gone, and Dolabella baniſh'd.
Believe me, Madam, Antony is yours.
His heart was never loſt; but ſtarted off
To jealouſy, love's laſt retreat and covert,
Where it lies hid in ſhades, watchful in ſilence,
And liſt'ning for the ſound that calls it back.
Some other, any man, ('tis ſo advanc'd)
May perfect this unfiniſh'd work, which I
(Unhappy only to myſelf) have left
So eaſy to his hand.
Cleo. Look well thou do't; elſe——
Alex. Elſe, what your ſilence threatens.——Antony
Is mounted up the Pharos: from whoſe turret,
He ſtands ſurveying our Egyptian gallies,
Engag'd with Cæſar's fleet: now death, or conqueſt.
If the firſt happen, Fate acquits my promiſe:
If we o'ercome, the conqueror is yours.
[*A diſtant ſhout within.*
Char. Have comfort, Madam: did you mark that ſhout? [*Second ſhout nearer.*
Iras. Hark! they redouble it.
Alex. 'Tis from the port.
The loudneſs ſhows it near: good news, kind Heav'ns.
Cleo. Oſiris make it ſo.

Enter SERAPION.

Serap. Where, where's the queen?
Alex. How frightfully the holy coward ſtares!
As if not yet recover'd of th' aſſault,
When all his gods, and what's moſt dear to him,
His off'rings, were at ſtake.
Serap. O horror, horror!
Egypt has been: our lateſt hour is come:
The Queen of Nations from her ancient ſeat
Is ſunk for ever in the dark abyſs:
Time has unroll'd her glories to the laſt,
And now clos'd up the volume.
Cleo. Be more plain:
Say, whence thou cam'ſt, (though fate is in thy face:
Which from thy haggard eyes looks wildly out,
And threatens ere thou ſpeak'ſt.)

Serap. I came from Pharos;
From viewing (ſpare me, and imagine it)
Our land's laſt hope, your navy——
Cleo. Vanquiſh'd?
Serap. No.
They fought not.
Cleo. Then they fled.
Serap. Nor that. I ſaw,
With Antony, your well-appointed fleet
Row out, and thrice he wav'd his hand on high,
And thrice with cheerful cries they ſhouted back:
'Twas then falſe Fortune, like a fawning ſtrumpet,
About to leave the bankrupt prodigal,
With a diſſembled ſmile would kiſs at parting,
And flatter to the laſt; the well-tim'd oars
Now dipt from every bank, now ſmoothly run
To meet the foe; and ſoon indeed they met,
But not as foes. In few, we ſaw their caps
On either ſide thrown up: th' Egyptian gallies
(Receiv'd like friends) paſs'd through, and fell behind
The Roman rear: and now they all come forward,
And ride within the port.
Cleo. Enough, Sarapion:
I've heard my doom. This needed not, you Gods:
When I loſt Antony, your work was done;
'Tis but ſuperfluous malice. Where's my Lord?
How bears he this laſt blow?
Serap. His fury cannot be expreſs'd by words:
Thrice he attempted headlong to have fall'n
Full on his foes, and aim'd at Cæſar's galley:
With-held, he raves on you: cries he's betray'd.
Should he now find you——
Alex. Shun him, ſeek your ſafety,
'Till you can clear your innocence.
Cleo. I'll ſtay.
Alex. You muſt not; haſte you to your monument;
While I make ſpeed to Cæſar.
Cleo. Cæſar! no,
I have no buſineſs with him.
Alex. I can work him
To ſpare your life, and let this madman periſh.

Cleo.

Cleo. Baſe fawning wretch! would'ſt thou betray him too?
Hence from my ſight, I will not hear a traitor:
'Twas thy deſign brought all this ruin on us;
Serapion, thou art honeſt, counſel me:
But haſte, each moment's precious.
Serap. Retire, you muſt not yet ſee Antony.
He who began this miſchief,
'Tis juſt he tempt the danger: let him clear you:
And ſince he offer'd you his ſervile tongue,
To gain a poor precarious life from Cæſar,
Let him expoſe that fawning eloquence,
And ſpeak to Antony.
Alex. O Heavens! I dare not,
I meet my certain death.
Cleo. Slave thou deſerv'ſt it.
Not that I fear my Lord, will I avoid him;
I know him noble: when he baniſh'd me,
And thought me falſe, he ſcorn'd to take my life;
But I'll be juſtify'd, and then die with him.
Alex. O pity me, and let me follow you.
Cleo. To death, if thou ſtir hence. Speak, if thou can'ſt,
Now for thy life, which baſely thou would'ſt ſave,
While mine I prize at this. Come, good Serapion.
[*Exeunt* Cleo. Serap. Char. *and* Iras.
Alex. O that I leſs cou'd fear to loſe this being,
Which, like a ſnowball, in my coward hand,
The more 'tis graſp'd the faſter melts away.
Poor reaſon! what a wretched aid art thou!
For ſtill, in ſpight of thee,
Theſe two long lovers, ſoul and body, dread
Their final ſeparation. Let me think:
What can I ſay, to ſave myſelf from death?
No matter what becomes of Cleopatra.
Ant. Which way? where? [*Within.*
Ven. This leads to th' monument. [*Within.*
Alex. Ah me! I hear him, yet I'm unprepar'd:
My gift of lying's gone;
And this court-devil, which I ſo oft have rais'd,
Forſakes me at my need. I dare not ſtay;
Yet cannot go far hence. [*Exit.*

Enter

Enter ANTONY *and* VENTIDIUS.

Ant. O happy Cæsar! Thou hast men to lead:
Think not 'tis thou hast conquer'd Antony;
But Rome has conquer'd Egypt. I'm betray'd.
Ven. Curse on this treach'rous train!
Their soil and heaven infect 'em all with baseness:
And their young souls come tainted to the world
With the first breath they draw.
Ant. Th' original villain sure no god created;
He was a bastard of the sun, by Nile,
Ape'd into man, with all his mother's mud
Crusted about his soul.
Ven. The nation is
One universal traitor; and their queen
The very spirit and extract of 'em all.
Ant. Is there yet left
A possibility of aid from valour?
Is there one god unsworn to my destruction?
The least unmortgag'd hope? for, if there be,
Methinks I cannot fall beneath the fate
Of such a boy as Cæsar.
The world's one half is yet in Antony;
And from each limb of it that's hew'd away,
The soul comes back to me.
Ven. There yet remain
Three legions in the town. The last assault
Lopt off the rest: if death be our design,
As I must wish it now, these are sufficient
To make a heap about us of dead foes,
An honest pile for burial.
Ant. They're enough.
We'll not divide our stars: but side by side
Fight emulous, and with malicious eyes
Survey each other's acts: so every death
Thou giv'st, I'll take on me, as a just debt,
And pay thee in a soul.
Ven. Now you shall see I love you. Not a word
Of chiding more. By my few hours of life
I am so pleas'd with this brave Roman fate,
That I would not be Cæsar to outlive you.
When we put off this flesh, and mount together,

I shall

I ſhall be ſhown to all th' etherial crowd;
Lo, this is he who dy'd with Antony.
Ant. Who knows but we may pierce thro' all their troops,
And reach my Veterans yet? 'Tis worth the tempting,
T' o'er-leap this gulph of fate,
And leave our wond'ring deſtinies behind.

Enter ALEXAS, *trembling.*

Ven. See, ſee that villain;
See Cleopatra ſtampt upon that face
With all her cunning, all her arts of falſehood!
How ſhe looks out through thoſe diſſembling eyes!
How he has ſet his count'nance for deceit;
And promiſes a lie before he ſpeaks!
Let me diſpatch him firſt. [*Drawing.*
Alex. O ſpare me, ſpare me.
Ant. Hold; he's not worth your killing On thy life,
(Which thou may'ſt keep, becauſe I ſcorn to take it),
No ſyllable to juſtify thy queen;
Save thy baſe tongue its office.
Alex. Sir, ſhe's gone,
Where ſhe ſhall never be moleſted more
By love, or you.
Ant. Fled to her Dolabella!
Die, traitor, I revoke my promiſe, die. [*Going to kill him.*
Alex. O hold, ſhe is not fled.
Ant. She is: my eyes
Are open to her falſehood; my whole life
Has been a golden dream of love and friendſhip.
But, now I wake, I'm like a merchant, rous'd
From ſoft repoſe, to ſee his veſſel ſinking,
And all his wealth caſt o'er. Ungrateful woman!
Who follow'd me, but as the ſwallow ſummer,
Hatching her young ones in my kindly beams,
Singing her flatt'ries to my morning wake;
But, now my winter comes, ſhe ſpreads her wings,
And ſeeks the ſpring of Cæſar.
Alex. Think not ſo;
Her fortunes have in all things mix'd with yours.
Had ſhe betray'd her naval force to Rome,

How

How eaſily might ſhe have gone to Cæſar,
Secure by ſuch a bribe!
Ven. She ſent it firſt,
To be more welcome after.
Ant. 'Tis too plain;
Elſe wou'd ſhe have appear'd to clear herſelf.
Alex. Too fatally ſhe has; ſhe could not bear
To be accus'd by you; but ſhut herſelf
Within her monument: look'd down and ſigh'd;
While, from her unchang'd face, the ſilent tears
Dropt, as they had not leave, but ſtole their parting.
Some undiſtinguiſh'd words ſhe inly murmur'd;
At laſt, ſhe rais'd her eyes, and, with ſuch looks
As dying Lucrece caſt———
Ant. My heart forebodes———
Ven. All for the beſt, go on.
Alex. She ſnatch'd her poinard,
And, ere we could prevent the fatal blow,
Plung'd it within her breaſt; then turn'd to me,
Go, bear my Lord (ſaid ſhe) my laſt farewell;
And aſk him, if he yet ſuſpect my faith.
More ſhe was ſaying, but Death ruſh'd betwixt.
She half pronounc'd your name with her laſt breath,
And bury'd half within her.
Ven. Heav'n be prais'd.
Ant. Then art thou innocent, my poor dear love?
And art thou dead?
O thoſe two words! their ſound ſhould be divided:
Hadſt thou been falſe, and dy'd; or hadſt thou liv'd,
And hadſt been true—but innocence and death!
This ſhows not well above. Then what am I,
The murderer of this truth, this innocence?
Thoughts cannot form themſelves in words ſo horrid
As can expreſs my guilt!
Ven. Is't come to this? The gods have been too gra-
And thus you thank 'em for't. [cious;
Ant to Alex.] Why ſtay'ſt thou here?
Is it for thee to ſpy upon my ſoul,
And ſee its inward mourning? Get thee hence;
Thou art not worthy to behold what now
Becomes a Roman emp'ror to perform.
Alex. He loves her ſtill: [*Aſide.*

His

His grief betrays it. Good! the joy to find
She's yet alive completes the reconcilement.
I've ſav'd myſelf and her. But, oh! the Romans!
Fate comes too faſt upon my wit,
Hunts me too hard, and meets me at each double. [*Exit.*

Ven. Wou'd ſhe had dy'd a little ſooner, though
Before Octavia went; you might have treated:
Now 'twill look tame, and wou'd not be receiv'd.
Come, rouſe yourſelf, and let's die warm together.

Ant. I will not fight: there's no more work for war:
The bus'neſs of my angry hours is done.

Ven. Cæſar is at your gates.

Ant. Why, let him enter;
He's welcome now.

Ven. What lethargy has crept into your ſoul?

Ant. 'Tis but a ſcorn of life, and juſt deſire
To free myſelf from bondage.

Ven. Do it bravely.

Ant. I will, but not by fighting. O Ventidius!
What ſhould I fight for now? My Queen is dead.
I was but great for her; my pow'r, my empire,
Were but my merchandiſe to buy her love;
And conquer'd kings my factors. Now ſhe's dead,
Let Cæſar take the world———
An empty circle, ſince the jewel's gone,
Which made it worth my ſtrife: my being's nauſeous;
For all the bribes of life are gone away.

Ven. Wou'd you be taken?

Ant. Yes, I wou'd be taken;
But, as a Roman ought, dead my Ventidius:
For I'll convey my ſoul from Cæſar's reach,
And lay down life myſelf. 'Tis time the world
Shou'd have a lord, and know whom to obey.
We too have kept its homage in ſuſpence,
And bent the globe on whoſe each ſide we trod,
Till it was dinted inwards: let him walk
Alone upon't: I'm weary of my part.
My torch is out; and the world ſtands before me
Like a black deſert at th' approach of night:
I'll lay me down, and ſtray no farther on.

Ven. I could be griev'd,
But that I'll not outlive you: chuſe your death;

For,

For, I have ſeen him in ſuch various ſhapes,
I care not which I take: I'm only troubled,
The life I bear is worn to ſuch a rag,
'Tis ſcarce worth giving. I could wiſh indeed
We threw it from us with a better grace:
That, like two lions taken in the toils,
We might at leaſt thruſt out our paws, and wound
The hunters that incloſe us.
Ant. I have thought on't,
Ventidius, you muſt live.
Ven. I muſt not, Sir.
Ant. Wilt thou not live to ſpeak ſome good of me?
To ſtand by my fair fame, and guard th' approaches
From the ill tongues of men?
Ven. Who ſhall guard mine
For living after you?
Ant. Say I command it.
Ven. If we die well, our deaths will ſpeak themſelves,
And need no living witneſs.
Ant. Thou haſt lov'd me,
And fain I wou'd reward thee: I muſt die.
Kill me, and take the merit of my death,
To make thee friends with Cæſar.
Ven. Thank your kindneſs.
You ſaid I lov'd you; and, in recompenſe,
You bid me turn a traitor: did I think
You wou'd have us'd me thus? that I ſhould die
With a hard thought of you?
Ant. Forgive me, Roman.
Since I have heard of Cleopatra's death,
My reaſon bears no rule upon my tongue,
But lets my thoughts break all at random out:
I've thought better; do not deny me twice.
Ven By Heav'n I will not,
Let it not be t' outlive you.
Ant. Kill me firſt,
And then die thou; for 'tis but juſt thou ſerve
Thy friend, before thyſelf.
Ven. Give me your hand.
We ſoon ſhall meet again. Now, farewell, Emperor.
[*Embrace.*
Methinks that word's too cold to be my laſt:

Since Death ſweeps all diſtinctions, farewell, friend,
That's all———
I will not make a buſineſs of a trifle:
And yet I cannot look on you, and kill you;
Pray turn your face.
Ant. I do: ſtrike home; be ſure.
Ven. Home, as my ſword will reach. [*Kills himſelf.*
Ant. O thou miſtak'ſt,
That wound was none of thine; give it me back:
Thou robb'ſt me of my death.
Ven. I do indeed;
But, think 'tis the firſt time I e'er deceiv'd you;
If that may plead my pardon. And you, gods,
Forgive me, if you will; for I die perjur'd,
Rather than kill my friend. [*Dies.*
Ant. Farewell. Ever my leader, ev'n in death!
My queen and thou have got the ſtart of me;
And I'm the lag of honour——Gone ſo ſoon?
Is Death no more? He us'd him careleſsly,
With a familiar kindneſs; ere he knock'd,
Ran to the door, and took him in his arms,
As who ſhould ſay, You're welcome at all hours,
A friend need give no warning. Books had ſpoil'd him;
For all the learn'd are cowards by profeſſion.
'Tis not worth
My farther thought; for death, for ought I know,
Is but to think no more. Here's to be ſatisfy'd,
[*Falls on his ſword.*
I've miſt my heart. O unperforming hand!
Thou never could'ſt have err'd in a worſe time.
My fortune jades me to the laſt; and Death,
Like a great man, takes ſtate, and makes me wait
For my admittance——— [*Trampling within.*
Some perhaps from Cæſar:
If he ſhould find me living, and ſuſpect
That I play'd booty with my life! I'll mend
My work, ere they can reach me. [*Riſes upon his knees.*

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMION, *and* IRAS.

Cleo. Where is my Lord? where is he?
Char. There he lies,
And dead Ventidius by him.

Cleo. My fears were prophets; I am come too late.
O that accurs'd Alexas! [*Runs to him.*
Ant. Art thou living!
Or am I dead before I knew? and thou
The firſt kind ghoſt that meets me?
Cleo. Help me ſeat him.
Send quickly, ſend for help. [*They place him in a chair.*
Ant. I am anſwer'd.
We live both. Sit thee down, my Cleopatra:
I'll make the moſt I can of life, to ſtay
A moment more with thee.
Cleo. How is it with you?
Ant. 'Tis as with a man
Removing in a hurry; all pack'd up,
But one dear jewel that his haſte forgot;
And he for that returns upon the ſpur:
So I come back, for thee.
Cleo. Too long, ye Heav'ns, you have been cruel to me;
Now ſhow your mended faith, and give me back
His fleeting life.
Ant. It will not be, my Love,
I keep my ſoul by force.
Say but thou art not falſe.
Cleo. 'Tis now too late
To ſay I'm true: I'll prove it, and die with you.
Unknown to me, Alexas feign'd my death;
Which, when I knew, I haſted to prevent
This fatal conſequence. My fleet betray'd
Both you and me
Ant. And Dolabella——
Cleo. Scarce eſteem'd before he lov'd; but hated now.
Ant. Enough: My life's not long enough for more.
Thou ſay'ſt thou wilt come after: I believe thee;
For I can now believe whate'er thou ſay'ſt,
That we may part more kindly.
Cleo. I will come:
Doubt not, my Life, I'll come, and quickly too:
Cæſar ſhall triumph o'er no part of thee.
Ant. But grieve not while thou ſtay'ſt
My laſt diſaſtrous times:
Think we have had a clear and glorious day;
And Heav'n did kindly to delay the ſtorm

Juſt

Juſt till our cloſe of evening. Ten years love,
And not a moment loſt, but all improv'd
To th' utmoſt joys; what ages have we liv'd!
And now to die each others; and, ſo dying,
While hand in hand we walk in groves below,
Whole troops of lovers ghoſts ſhall flock about us,
And all the train be ours.

Cleo. Your words are like the notes of dying ſwans,
Too ſweet to laſt. Were there ſo many hours
For your unkindneſs, and not one for love?

Ant. No, not a minute—This one kiſs—more worth
Than all I leave to Cæſar. [*Dies.*

Cleo. O tell me ſo again,
And take ten thouſand kiſſes for that word.
My Lord, my Lord: ſpeak, if you yet have being;
Sigh to me, if you cannot ſpeak; or caſt
One look: do any thing that ſhows you live.

Iras. He's gone too far to hear you;
And this you ſee, a lump of ſenſeleſs clay,
The leavings of a ſoul.

Char. Remember, Madam,
He charg'd you not to grieve.

Cleo. And I'll obey him.
I have not lov'd a Roman, not to know
What ſhould become his wife; his wife, my Charmion;
For 'tis to that high title I aſpire;
And now I'll not die leſs. Let dull Octavia
Survive, to mourn him dead: my noble fate
Shall knit our ſpouſals with a tie too ſtrong
For Roman laws to break.

Iras. Will you then die?

Cleo. Why ſhouldſt thou make that queſtion?

Iras. Cæſar is merciful.

Cleo. Let him be ſo
To thoſe that want his mercy: my poor Lord
Made no ſuch cov'nant with him, to ſpare me
When he was dead. Yield me to Cæſar's pride!
What, to be led in triumph through the ſtreets,
A ſpectacle to baſe plebeian eyes!
While ſome dejected friend of Antony's,
Cloſe in a corner, ſhakes his head, and mutters

A ſecret curſe on her who ruin'd him?
I'll none of that.
Char. Whatever you reſolve,
I'll follow ev'n to death.
Iras. I only fear'd
For you; but more ſhould fear to live without you.
Cleo. Why, now 'tis as it ſhould be. Quick, my friends,
Diſpatch; ere this the town's in Cæſar's hands:
My Lord looks down concern'd, and fears my ſtay,
Leſt I ſhould be ſurpris'd;
Keep him not waiting for his love too long.
You, Charmion, bring my crown and richeſt jewels,
With 'em, the wreath of victory I made
(Vain augury!) for him who now lies dead;
You, Iras, bring the cure of all our ills.
Iras. The aſpics, Madam?
Cleo. Muſt I bid you twice? [*Ex.* Char. *and* Iras.
'Tis ſweet to die, when they would force life on me,
To ruſh into the dark abode of Death,
And ſeize him firſt; if he be like my love,
His is not frightful ſure.
We're now alone, in ſecrecy and ſilence;
And is not this like lovers? I may kiſs
Thoſe pale, cold lips; Octavia does not ſee me;
And, oh! 'tis better far to have him thus,
Than ſee him in her arms—O welcome, welcome!

Enter CHARMION *and* IRAS.

Char. What muſt be done?
Cleo. Short ceremony, friends;
But yet it muſt be decent. Firſt, this laurel
Shall crown my hero's head: he fell not baſely,
Nor left his ſhield behind him. Only thou
Could'ſt triumph o'er thyſelf; and thou alone
Wert worthy ſo to triumph.
Char. To what end
Theſe enſigns of your pomp and royalty?
Cleo. Dull, that thou art! why, 'tis to meet my love;
As when I ſaw him firſt, on Cydno's bank,
All ſparkling, like a goddeſs; ſo adorn'd
I'll find him once again: my ſecond ſpouſals

Shall

Shall match my firſt in glory. Haſte, haſte, both,
And dreſs the bride of Antony.
Char. 'Tis done.
Cleo. Now ſet me by my Lord. I claim this place;
For I muſt conquer Cæſar too, like him,
And win my ſhare o' th' world. Hail, you dear relics
Of my immortal love!
O let no impious hand remove you hence;
But reſt for ever here: let Egypt give
His death that peace which it deny'd his life.
Reach me the caſket.
Iras. Underneath the fruit the aſpic lies.
Cleo. Welcome, thou kind deceiver!
[*Putting aſide the leaves.*
Thou beſt of thieves; who, with an eaſy key,
Doſt open life, and, unperceiv'd by us,
Ev'n ſteals us from ourſelves: diſcharging ſo
Death's dreadful office better than himſelf,
Touching our limbs ſo gently into ſlumber,
That Death ſtands by, deceiv'd by his own image,
And thinks himſelf but Sleep
Ser. The Queen, where is ſhe? [*Within.*
The town is yielded, Cæſar's at the gates.
Cleo. He comes too late t'invade the rights of Death.
Haſte, bare my arm, and rouſe the ſerpent's fury.
[*Holds out her arm, and draws it back.*
Coward fleſh———
Would'ſt thou conſpire with Cæſar to betray me,
As thou wert none of mine? I'll force thee to't,
And not be ſent by him,
But bring myſelf my ſoul to Antony.
[*Turns aſide, and then ſhews her arm bloody.*
Take hence; the work is done.
Ser. Break ope the door, [*Within.*
And guard the traitor well.
Char. The next is ours.
Iras. Now, Charmion, to be worthy
Of our great queen and miſtreſs. [*They apply the aſpics.*
Cleo. Already, Death, I feel thee in my veins;
I go with ſuch a will to find my Lord,
That we ſhall quickly meet.
A heavy numbneſs creeps through every limb,

And now 'tis at my head: my eyelids fall,
And my dear love is vaniſh'd in a miſt.
Where ſhall I find him, where? O turn me to him,
And lay me on his breaſt——Cæſar, thy worſt;
Now part us, if thou can'ſt. [*Dies.*

[Iras *ſinks down at her feet, and dies;* Charmion *ſtands behind her chair, as dreſſing her head.*

Enter SERAPION, *two prieſts*, ALEXAS *bound*, Egyptians,

2. *Prieſts.* Behold, Serapion, what havock Death has made!

Serap. 'Twas what I fear'd.
Charmion, is this well done?

Char. Yes, 'tis well done, and like a Queen, the laſt
Of her great race: I follow her. [*Sinks down; dies.*

Alex. 'Tis true,
She has done well: much better thus to die
Than live to make a holiday in Rome.

Serap. See, how the lovers ſit in ſtate together,
As they were giving laws to half mankind.
Th' impreſſion of a ſmile left in her face
Shows ſhe died pleas'd with him for whom ſhe liv'd,
And went to charm him in another world.
Cæſar's juſt entering; Grief has now no leiſure.
Secure that villain as our pledge of ſafety,
To grace th' imperial triumph. Sleep, bleſt pair,
Secure from human chance, long ages out,
While all the ſtorms of Fate fly o'er your tomb;
And Fame, to late poſterity ſhall tell,
No lovers liv'd ſo great, or died ſo well.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE.

POETS, like diſputants, when reaſons fail,
Have one ſure refuge left, and that's to rail.
Fop, coxcomb, fool, are thunder'd through the pit;
And this is all their equipage of wit.
We wonder how the devil this diff'rence grows,
Betwixt our fools in verſe, and yours in proſe:
For, 'faith, the quarrel rightly underſtood,
'Tis civil war *with their own fleſh and blood.*
The thread-bare Author hates the gawdy coat,
And ſwears at the gilt coach; but ſwears a-foot;
For 'tis obſerv'd of every ſcribbling man,
He grows a fop as faſt as e'er he can;
Prunes up, and asks his oracle the glaſs,
If pink or purple beſt become his face.
For our poor wretch, he neither rails nor prays,
Nor likes your wit, juſt as you like his plays;
He has not yet ſo much of Mr Bayes.
He does his beſt; and if he cannot pleaſe,
Would quietly ſue out his writ of Eaſe.
Yet, if he might his own grand jury call,
By the fair ſex he begs to ſtand or fall.
Let Cæſar's *pow'r the men's ambition move,*
But grace you him who loſt the World for Love.
Yet if ſome antiquated lady ſay,
The laſt age is not copy'd in his play,
Heav'n help the man who for that face muſt drudge,
Which only has the wrinkles of a judge.
Let not the young and beauteous join with thoſe;
For ſhould you raiſe ſuch numerous hoſts of foes,
Young wits and ſparks he to his aid muſt call;
'Tis more than one man's work to pleaſe you all.

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